

# Music & Letters

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JANUARY, 1929.

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VOLUME X

No. 1

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## CLAUDE DEBUSSY

THE publication of this essay is dictated by a series of causes and conditions. In the first place there is the complete lack of an original and, I would say, 'Russian' appreciation of one of the greatest composers of recent times—a composer who was himself to some extent created by the reaction of Russian musical culture and who, in return, exercised so powerful an influence on Russian music, in its more contemporary form of course. Hitherto Russian literature on the subject of Debussy, apart from brief journalistic articles and notes, has consisted of translations of French appreciations. With all respect to the literary style and musical tastes of my foreign colleagues, Messieurs Louis Laloy, M. Calvocoressi, and Chennevière, as well as of Romain Rolland, who also contributed his mite to the symphony of incense which ascended before the throne of Debussy, I cannot but point out that in their appreciations, as is very often the case with the French, patriotism too frequently obscures the truth and literary eloquence the judgment. One can refer with the greatest esteem to Debussy's genius for composition, but justice demands the recognition of the fact that a feuilleton is never an aesthetic appreciation and that French musical criticism, even in its best representatives, never rises above the level of a brilliant but superficial feuilleton. Thus Debussy is so far essentially unappraised, since German musical sentiment organically rejects him, and Russia has not yet plucked up courage to enunciate its considered estimate of an undoubted genius, and moreover a genius of typically Latin culture.

The time for this appreciation is now, when the influence of Debussy's genius is still fresh, but when the atmosphere, already saturated with other artistic expectations, compels us to suppose that these influences in their fundamental aesthetic tinge are not enduring.

It is precisely in Russia that Debussy's genius may be objectively assessed; it is essentially foreign to contemporary Germany, and so aesthetically immanent in French musical sentiment that the latter is deprived of the possibility of investigating it.

This essay gives, in as brief a form as possible, an aesthetic characterisation of the composer's creative work, which must undoubtedly be included in the category of the most brilliant phenomena of recent times. Biographical data are reduced to a minimum: this is the more permissible in that Debussy's outer life had no glowing moments and did not abound in events. Whilst confining myself entirely to aesthetic criteria, I have felt compelled to notice, from the point of view of the collision of two cultures, the orientation of Debussy's work, only too clear to us who have survived the war and the revolution. The former culture, refined and degenerate, before its disappearance produced the alluring blooms of aesthetic attainments; the new culture, tempestuous, elemental, has not yet acquired the lineaments of beauty—it even despises them—but it has within itself the manifest and indisputable elements of future life and development.

Moscow, 1922.

## I

The judgment of the contemporary musical world has added Claude Debussy to those culminating peaks of the musical art by which history is guided in its reckoning of events. A whole generation has seen in him its prophet, the herald of a new music released from its fetters, music freed from tradition and the grip of the academic and boldly and fearlessly penetrating into immeasurable worlds of tone. What Wagner was to the previous generation, what, to some extent, Skryabin was to Russia, that was Debussy to young musical France. Debussy's value and significance, however, do not lie in this historical resemblance, but in the difference which he, as an innovator, displayed in his individuality when compared with these two, also innovators, since Debussy's aesthetic world was at all times the opposite of the world which supplied the sources and impulses of the creative work of Skryabin and Wagner.

### *Musical Ancestry.*

In order to estimate Debussy's musical element we shall have to consider the components from which it was created. For the understanding and judging of the phenomenon of creative work it is far more important to know the musical ancestors of a composer than his physical forefathers. And in this sense Debussy's genealogy and

family tree are very instructive and perhaps more intricate and ramified than those of the other great composers.

Musically this French patrician amongst composers comes of a very illustrious race. Latin culture of a thousand years presses upon and even crushes his creative stimulus. He is wholly a consequence, an uninterrupted inheritance, and the element of an individual, vehement, youthful will to creation in him shrivels organically before the concatenation of cosmic, social, and national forces determining his psychics, his creative work, and his very 'revolutionism,' which differs so sharply from the revolutionary tempest of Wagner and Skryabin.

He belongs entirely to the French breed. I doubt if any other composer is more national. Our kuchkisty,\* who hurriedly attired the folk-melos in German raiment, are a compact curiosity, a purely seignorial contrivance, in comparison with the profound connection which makes Debussy a magnificent, exotic, fragrant flower of that tree whose roots penetrated deep into the soil of Provence and Ile-de-France, and resounded in the musical world of their time with the southern songs of the troubadours; that tree whose leaves were such purely French geniuses as Couperin and Rameau, who reflected in their musical world those æsthetic ideas formed like the age-long hills, solid, compact, unchangeable. The same heavens illuminated the troubadour, Couperin, and Debussy—the one vision of art was common to them all.

The profound antiquity of that national soul—that is what strikes us first of all in this creative work. Breed always implies a certain degeneration. The exhaustion of the spiritual aristocrat is expressed in so insatiable a demand for taste that this cult of taste obscures everything else in art. The French were unhealthily sensitive to the lack of taste in the greatest representatives of German music, in Beethoven (for Debussy's own opinion of him see Felix Weingartner's letter), in Bach, and especially in Wagner. Taste is the lowest expression of the æsthetic contemplations, and in the opinion of æsthetic philosophers is that taste which in mankind is preferably possessed by the feminine section and is the least masculine, least spiritually developed element of the other sex. France is a land of feminine culture; in its psychology it is not difficult to discover all the characteristic components of the feminine soul—rationalism, practical common sense, the *nihil nimis* formula, the cult of the golden mean, excitability, sensuality, and, in the æsthetic domain, taste. And this cult of taste—the dwindling ardour of the spiritual emotions, cooling

\* The famous 'five,' Balakirev, Borodin, Cui, Musorgsky, and Rimsky-Korsakov. (Translator's note.)

the passions, setting a limit to every profound experience and determining its inevitable decrescendo—this cult is the central content of the æsthetics of the French spirit, which has come down to us unaltered from the Gaul of Julius Caesar's epoch. But that which was still young in the days of the troubadours, which sparkled and glittered with maturity in the period of *Le Roi Soleil*, lay with the burden of twenty centuries' inheritance on the descendant of the most ancient spiritual aristocracy in the world, the most refined of the refined, in whose veins ran the vitiated blood of the ancestral knights of Gaul, Claude Debussy.

The absence of the will to life, with the resultant contemplative trance, is the characteristic feature of this flower of the thousand-years-old giant tree, already decaying. The indifference to life which precedes its decline, and a minimum of wayward impulse, further restrained, moreover, by the perfected taste of a thousand years, of such is Debussy's creative plane.

#### *Couperin.*

His ancient, far-off kinsmen—it is the culture of the whole of musical France—are the troubadours, Rameau, and Couperin. After them the ancestral line is broken, and a perplexed and enquiring glance will remark the absence of almost any connection between Debussy's culture and the music of the grand era, either of Bach, or of Mozart, or of Beethoven, or, God forbid! of Wagner. All this is apart from him, and only an analytical consideration of the form can here grasp the connecting links and threads. But this is the other pole of the æsthetic contemplation of the world. There you have might, the cult of violence, the daring of the highwayman, or a granitic monumentalness, a reverent humility in the presence of the incomprehensible. There were no men amongst Debussy's ancestors, there were only women. Here, besides effeminacy there is also atony of life, the ascent to the contemplative state before the extinction of existence. Hence, possibly, the East sometimes awakes in Debussy's music—the East, that cradle of the culture of the ages, that grave of a series of changing civilisations, of extinct and exhausted peoples; the East which for a century has sunk into that feeble contemplative semi-existence leading to final death. Younger than the East, but likewise decaying, the culture of the venerable nation of France stretches out its hand to the other yet more venerable ancients of the human race.

#### *Chopin.*

True there is also the Slavo-French Chopin, traces of whose influence on Debussy may still be detected. But he, of course, is in

art a woman and not a man. And the Slavs, too, are pre-eminently a feminine nation. Thus the parthenogenesis of Debussy appears to be fully established.

The absence of French ancestors during the period of the grand era is explained by the fact that France had at that time lost herself. Her national spirit had somehow been extinguished, and in the assiduous quest of existence had happened upon outlooks foreign to itself. Instead of taste we have its negative in the romantic exaggerations of the pseudo-Titan Berlioz and the quasi-Frenchman Meyerbeer. There is always a tendency to go from one extreme to another. And the frozen crag of French æstheticism, crushed by the pressure of the Revolution, gives us the grotesque contours of the Fantastic Symphony, the rationalistic romanticism of programme music, and finally, having no æsthetic criteria to guide it in the constantly changing ruling spheres, is baffled, and through the tastelessness of Meyerbeer falls captive to Wagner.

Wagner, as Felix Weingartner shrewdly said, was indigestible to the French stomach, and to this day lies on it like a lump. But it is not so easy to get away from him. The enchantments of the Bayreuth Klingsor enveloped the French outlook for more than half a century. The whole of French music from Saint-Saëns onwards is an uninterrupted story of the struggle of the French phagocytes with the German toxins, and of the little good that came of it. The ageing organism could not resist the new, foreign blood imported into it. But this German blood was too alien to the Latin organism. There is no doubt that the French had quite a distorted conception—superficial and incoherent—of Wagner, that all the profundity of his creative work and his elemental genius escaped them. It is evident that the finer and more gifted among them, if they did not comprehend Wagner, were at least sensible of his remoteness from the French genius.

If Bizet, in strict conformity with his national type, was the first Frenchman to pass Wagner by, Debussy was here even more typical. The whole of his musical make-up is the antithesis of the Wagnerian ideals, methods, æsthetic views. In the person of Debussy the old culture, having vomited the undigested Teutonism foreign to it, falls into a moribund contemplativeness, almost entirely exempt from any unrestrained impulses.

#### *Musorgsky.*

But a senescent culture instinctively seeks a free, tempestuous, barbaric blood, which resuscitates the organism. Otherwise it would sink into a creative marasmus, into impotence, into the deliberateness of the superficial æstheticism of taste. An aspiration to set music

free, but absolutely within the limits of good taste, that is what inspires Debussy. There is nothing more characteristic of the French spirit than this 'revolutionism within the bounds of taste,' than this æstheticising rationalism and revolutionary æstheticism. Fate helped Debussy, as the person destined to adorn with the last flowers of genius the decaying trunk of the giant tree of romantic culture. Fate brought him to the East, to Russia, where his genius acquired a series of fructifying grafts from the young, vital musicality of that country.

Biographically this means that Debussy, who was born in 1862 and absorbed the cream of the age-long romance musical culture at the Paris Conservatoire, happened while still a young man to visit the house of a Moscow millionaire, von Meck, where he came into contact with such phenomena of the musical world as Musorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Balakirev, and Borodin.

Of course it is necessary to be a Frenchman such as Laloy or Chennevière, with their immutable, self-sufficient, naïve self-confidence, in order to assert that cultured Russian music remained unknown to Debussy (and this in the house of one of the most enlightened representatives of the Moscow bourgeoisie!), and that the reaction of 'barbarous' Russia on the French composer was exhausted by the music . . . of the Russian gipsies, who are supposed to have been the first to give him an idea of the nature of music without rules.

Far be it from me to exaggerate the independence and revolutionary quality of the Russian 'kuchkism.' Probably one of the most prominent representatives of that same kuchkism, N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov, was right in saying that there is no Russian music. Now, more than ever, it is clear that the national features are not exhausted by the external resemblance between the melos and the folk-ethnographic, and to us Skryabin and Tchaikovsky, those two 'Russian foreigners,' will perhaps appear more profoundly Russian than even the excessively clear-cut (*à l'allemande*) and rational (*à la française*) Rimsky-Korsakov, although the whole of his melos is in the Russian manner and Skryabin's does not contain a single Russian melody. But we see what the Frenchman did not see, namely that the songs of the Moscow gipsies could not teach Debussy something that is not found in their music without rules, since everybody knows what sort of music it is, and how remote it is from any desire to be æsthetically revolutionary, how many rules there are in it. It is apparent, too, that that music could not transmit to Debussy's creative work whole turns of phrases which are germane to Musorgsky and Borodin and have so little in common with the gipsey element. It was just from Musorgsky (and almost certainly from that work of genius, 'Boris Godunov'), evidently the subject of much and careful study on the part of Debussy, that he obtained the beneficial graft of something fresh

and indispensable, which, combined with the age-long romance culture, produced the marvellous flower of his creative work.

This new, this fresh thing was Musorgsky's aesthetic nihilism, his presentation of music as a means of psychological enchantment, his aspiration to justify everything tonal that is conditioned by the problem of psychology. Debussy's revolutionism comes from Musorgsky, but the democratic, brigand soul of the simplified aristocrat and guardsman remained organically foreign to the former, and the secular fetters of taste confined that revolutionism within the new, strait prison of a self-limitation which was ashamed of anything harsh or tempestuous, which invested passion itself with the chaste veil of half-uttered words. But then we remember that the soul of Musorgsky was androgynous and not masculine, that this gifted nature was really less robust and coarse than it strove to be.

*Grieg.*

There is yet another ancestor whom we have not mentioned in this gallery of family portraits. Again it is one who, by his freshness, his contact with the soil, the family, the nation, might be a revivifying graft for the senile genius of France. It is Grieg. In his harmonic innovations, in his full-summed systematic impressionism, it is easy to perceive traits of resemblance to the harmonic worlds, to the psychological approach to tone material, which are evident in Debussy's work.

And so we have this gallery of the ancestors who formed Debussy's creative world and features. The ancient culture of the French fundamental, immemorial stream of music; the staid, somewhat rational musical contour, always restrained by the strict canon of taste, embodied in the melodies of the troubadours and minstrels and in the creations of the genius Couperin and the talented Rameau; something of Chopin's influence in his refined musical forms; a small graft from Musorgsky's barbaric musical spirit; and, lastly, the pantheistic impressionism of Grieg—such are his progenitors. The feminine quality of this gallery, previously remarked, is curious. It does not contain a single Titan (Musorgsky in his profound democratism is foreign to Debussy), not a single genius with a sense of the distinct, robust rhythm of life. It is always the half-tone and the mezzotint, which harmonise so well with the lassitude accompanying the poetic extinction of a great culture; with the senility of a spirit which has been tempted to subtilise experiences, a spirit in the main profoundly sceptical, having no belief in anything and least of all in the mystical roots of art.

*Salon Mallarmé.*

Geniuses such as Debussy, who show themselves to be essentially passive, conditioned by the heritage of culture, not impulsive but contemplative—such geniuses rarely display any strongly-marked evolution of style. In the case of Debussy we shall never find contrasts in style such as we see in the creative work of the earlier and later Beethoven; of the earlier and later Wagner, who strode from what was almost untalentedness to the extreme limits of genius; or of the earlier and later Skryabin, who accomplished the journey from manifest imitation to exceptional originality. Of course, the full revelation of his talent does not come all at once, but there are none of those fluctuations; the level, even line of development rapidly attains its culmination, where it remains steady for a long while. Academically the Debussy of the earlier years is almost uninteresting. His 'L'Enfant Prodigue,' a semi-student work, for which the future innovator was awarded the Prix de Rome by such guardians of musical law and order as the members of the French Conservatoire have always been, this work foretells the real Debussy to a greater extent than did the Chopin-like Skryabin of the first works foreshadow the Skryabin of 'Prometheus.' In 'La Damoiselle Élue' we already see Debussy in the panoply of his own resources. If it were possible to draw a sketch of the evolution of their styles, we

should find that Debussy's would be a very simple one, while that of Skryabin would be a complex one, with only an analytical consideration of the form can here grasp the connecting links and threads. But this is the other pole of the aesthetic contemplation of the world. There you have might, the cult of violence, the daring of the highwayman, or a granitic monumentalness, a reverent humility in the presence of the incomprehensible. There were no men amongst Debussy's ancestors, there were only women. Here, besides effeminacy there is also atony of life, the ascent to the contemplative state before the extinction of existence. Hence, possibly, the East sometimes awakes in Debussy's music—the East, that cradle of the culture of the ages, that grave of a series of changing civilisations, of extinct and exhausted peoples; the East which for a century has sunk into that feeble contemplative semi-existence leading to final death. Younger than the East, but likewise decaying, the culture of the venerable nation of France stretches out its hand to the other yet more venerable ancients of the human race.

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Symbolical poetry displayed at that time an unprecedented gravitation towards music, towards the music of speech, towards immersion in an irrational element. Painting began to strive for self-satisfying luminous impressions, for a respite from 'depictiveness,' for the pure harmony of the variations of light. The musical irrational element penetrated the hitherto lucid world of art and shattered the ancient rationality of language and the objectivity of painting. One after another the old canons of the form of incarnation were discarded in the light of the perspectives which were revealed of freely-changing traits, features, and outlines.

Symbolism in poetry implied a reading between the lines and the words, a comprehension of the inexpressible. Possibly it was distinguished from Russian symbolism by the very fact that it was more psychological and did not set before itself ontological connections. The variability of moods in speech, the variability of tints in colours. There can be no doubt that our Russian symbolism, profound, ontological, and essentially philosophical, was the progenitor of Skryabin, with his theurgomania, just as the aesthetic symbolism of the French produced the picturesque tonal impressionism of Debussy. Different—  
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Any natural endowment, and genius more particularly, is always providentially surrounded by the spiritual atmosphere which it needs. It happens of itself, as it were. Debussy undoubtedly found an atmosphere spiritually akin to him in the circle of artists, performers, and poets which grouped itself round Mallarmé. It is a curious fact that this powerful impulse did not come from a specially musical group, since Debussy was almost only the real musician belonging to it. The delicate organism of Debussy the spiritual aristocrat could not, of course, be satisfied with a restricted professionalism, with a rather narrow intellectual development, with a circle of musicians. He sought another, more refined sphere and found in it the group of symbolist poets and impressionist artists who were then heading the innovating tendencies in art.

Mallarmé's salon was the intellectual focus, as it were, of France. It was not even the 'upper ten thousand' of the spiritual aristocracy but the 'upper hundred,' a still narrower aristocratic, intellectually and aesthetically refined circle. The semipaternal culture of taste isolated from itself this centre of taste, as organically as morphologically torn from the medium which had nourished it. The

hierarchy of this intellectual development was crowned by this spiritual oligarchy, which, of course, did not attempt to establish itself on any democratic pedestal. They were, and desired to be, aristocrats.

Symbolical poetry displayed at that time an unprecedented gravitation towards music, towards the music of speech, towards immersion in an irrational element. Painting began to strive for self-satisfying luminous impressions, for a respite from 'depictiveness,' for the pure harmony of the variations of light. The musical irrational element penetrated the hitherto lucid world of art and shattered the ancient rationality of language and the objectivity of painting. One after another the old canons of the form of incarnation were discarded in the light of the perspectives which were revealed of freely-changing traits, features, and outlines.

Symbolism in poetry implied a reading between the lines and the words, a comprehension of the inexpressible. Possibly it was distinguished from Russian symbolism by the very fact that it was more psychological and did not set before itself ontological connections. The variability of moods in speech, the variability of tints in colours. There can be no doubt that our Russian symbolism, profound, ontological, and essentially philosophical, was the progenitor of Skryabin, with his theurgomania, just as the æsthetic symbolism of the French produced the picturesque tonal impressionism of Debussy. Different causes lead to different results. Here there was nothing of philosophy. French art has always had unfriendly relations with any kind of philosophy, especially the mystical. A rationalist at heart and a pure æsthetic (a difference in the gastronomic relation to life) the Frenchman would rather subscribe to the æsthetic formula 'Art for Art's sake' than write himself down seriously as a theurgist and magician, or consider art a religious act. If you like, it will be a religion, but then that real religion is overwhelmed in a wave of æstheticising skepsis. The absence of mystical and theurgical vestments is as characteristic of French symbolism as priesthood is of the Russian. And no one could ever suspect Debussy, a loyal son of the Salon Mallarmé, of a desire to become a priest and a god after the manner of Skryabin. He, this refined sceptic, has a superb knowledge of everything and believes in nothing except the psychological magic of art (an empirical fact). He knows his limitations and his full powers; he does not give himself airs, he does not mix art with politics, and still less does he wish to turn his oligarchic salon (and a salon it is) into a priestly organisation. 'We are creators; we can do much, but we know nothing, indeed it is impossible and unnecessary to know anything'—that is the secret motto of the exhausted senile skepsis of the spiritual cream of culture.

And lastly, all these mystical convulsions, all these great

anticipations, grandiose missions, consecrations, prophesying, apart from the fact that the reasoning mind does not accept them (and the Frenchman is always a rationalist), all these are inevitably in bad taste, like hysteria of any kind, like anything that does not desire the golden mean, that will not confine itself to the aesthetic, but attempts to fathom the depths, to peer into the abysses, to span the immeasurable, to reach the furthest frontiers. . . .

Wagner could not have been produced here; nor Dostoevsky, who gazed into the abyss; nor Skryabin, who dreamed of becoming a god. It is all bad taste, a want of balance. The most subtle and profound experiences must be weighed in the scales of taste. And over it all is the slight, elusive chill of skepsis, which abstracts any profundity from the phenomenon of art, and possibly of life.

*Atony, Atectionism.*

It is by no means surprising that the centre of taste of culture led to the cult of the half-tone. Again, brilliancy is, of course, bad taste, clamour, shrillness, triviality. Everything is smoothed over, and exhibited in a smoky haze. Sharpness of contour is destroyed, since in the mass it shows a lack of taste. But the pungency of sharpness is left, it may be piquant and provide a series of gustatory sensations; in the final reckoning, perhaps a gastronomic symphony of sensations. In order to doubt the reality of everything save taste, one need not, of course, be an Avenarius, it is sufficient to be a skeptic. Art becomes the most economical reception of sensations in the most complex form possible. Chaos does not stir because of these sensations, and even if it does they will have nothing to do with it, they are not interested in it. Profundity is also merely a sensation, and one abuses it at the risk of becoming bored and disgusted with it. Avoid too much exaltation lest it grow to be repugnant; too much beauty, lest a superfluity disfigure it. The only thing in which it is permissible to be excessive is taste.

I am convinced that to Debussy any Wagner or Beethoven is as comical as an inhabitant of Chukhloma is to a genuine Parisian. Naïveté has no place in this new, and at the same time old, great and infinitely weary, art; and Beethoven, with his joy in the whole of humanity, and Skryabin, with his dreams of the final reunion of the arts, were certainly naïve.

Why reunite them when they are excellent apart? And does it not show bad taste to set the nerves tingling by means of all the arts simultaneously when the true artist can do so with one alone? And what are the final aims of art in general? Do we really know? It

must not be forgotten, of course, that Voltaire and the Encyclopédistes were amongst the cultural ancestors of Debussy.

A clever, refined, highly-artistic protest against anything noisy, anything academically dry, anything trivial, anything 'overmuch' (even in the good sense of the term), anything extravagant, even anything insufficiently novel—that is Debussy's music. Nevertheless it is always a protest and not a revolution, since the latter appeals to the masses, and Debussy has no concern with them. This creative psychology is formed in him very quickly, and in 'La Damoiselle Éluë' we find him already fully clothed in his aesthetic convictions.

Distinctive of Debussy, as the result of the general character of his work, is the picturesque view of the total material which permeates the whole of that work. In this respect he is more of an innovator than anyone else, since at this point the succession from the old music is above all dissipated by him. Neither for Wagner, nor for Skryabin, nor even for any ultra-contemporary Prokofiev is tone resolved into individual colours, into separately contemplated moments. It is a part of speech, organically blended in its phenomenon. In all music there is distribution of the parts, the logic of the separate waves of sound.

With Debussy there is generally less of it, sometimes none at all. His music is a series of individual tones, each of which when contemplated yields a certain psychological deposit, and is replaced by a fresh one. As whimsically do the clouds melt in the sky, freely assuming various contours which have no connection with anything. With him there is no distribution of the parts, but on the other hand there is distribution of the harmonies. His follower, Ravel, is in this respect far more classical and retrograde. For Debussy the centre lies in the preservation of individual sensations and the psychological moments of their variability, and not in the entire form of reception as was the case with the music of the past and is still the case with the greater part of the music of the present.

Hence this peculiar quality of his, which may, if you choose, be designated as formlessness—atectonism. It again is not a formal ateckonism (so far as form is concerned, all its signs may be found in Debussy, even the traditional), it is psychological. In this refined music, with its distaste for emphasis, our consciousness does not detect the points of psychological support by which we have been accustomed to recognise harmonious proportions. And this element of perpetual delight in tonal sensations as such tends to provide us with a compact, unbroken, and endless succession of them. We are immersed in the music and do not contemplate it as something external; we bathe in tones, we do not gaze at them. In this dissolution, in this fusion

with the tonal world, we have enchantment and magic, but at the same time a certain organic defect. This music is essentially interminable; we may cease to listen to it, but it apparently has the faculty of continuing for ever, it persists, it is static, and form is for it something drawn on to it from without, something superfluous, it is as formless as the sky with its clouds, as the flowing river. At any point we may suspend our contemplation of it, and at any point resume it.

#### *Unity and Growth.*

By the year 1902 Debussy's creative powers had attained their full vigour. Side by side with this we have the appearance of his central compositions, 'L'Après-midi d'un Faune,' written to the text of Mallarmé's eclogue; a series of musical poems on verses by Baudelaire and Verlaine; the orchestral nocturnes; and, most important work of the whole period, the opera of 'Pelléas et Mélisande,' on a subject and text by Maeterlinck. If an analytical scrutiny perceives in these productions the influences of the creative work of his spiritual forefathers, from the old Frenchmen to Musorgsky, it is at the same time impossible to deny that all these influences are so organically transformed into the likeness of Debussy himself as to give the impression of an indivisible unity. The vast harmonic world, entirely new in its structure and in the method of its artistic contemplation; the delicate, irreproachable taste; the absolutely independent style of exposition, masterly in everything to which he turned his hand, whether pianoforte, voice, or orchestra; and, lastly, the quite unexampled sense of the colour of tone; creating perfectly new pianoforte sonorities and unprecedented orchestral effects—all this presents to us the Debussy of this period as a thoroughly mature composer and at the same time a great Master of the purely technical treatment of the tone-material.

The subsequent course of his creative work is no longer a revelation, but a sojourning as it were on the immense heights already attained. Such compositions as 'La Mer,' the 'Images' for pianoforte and the similarly entitled orchestral suite, and his numerous purely pianoforte, chamber, and vocal pieces, represent a suspension of the evolution of his style, and even a certain torpor in the manner of their achievement. Like all composers with a strongly-marked individuality and a series of characteristic methods of composition, the impression produced by the bulk of Debussy's creations is somewhat uniform and monotonous, and this is intensified by the cult, peculiar to him, of semitone nuances and the avoidance of physically brilliant, clear, and salient passages.

Nevertheless an attentive scrutiny may discover in his latest

productions certain fresh nuances, an advance, if you like, towards a greater simplicity, a more classical construction. Debussy's primary creative work was the incarnation of a protest against the *vis inertiae*, but this protest, of course, lost its meaning as time went on, since it was as far as possible assimilated and digested. This circumstance was undoubtedly bound to affect the style of his work, and it did so exactly as we should have supposed—it led to a certain retrospection. The 'Rondes de Printemps,' of course, bear the impress of this neoclassicism of Debussy's, but in his last pianoforte things there is much that stands out far more prominently.

Debussy completed his life's journey at the dawn of the war, at the period of the destruction of cultural interests and values. It may be said that he nearly succeeded in expressing everything of which he was capable. His final works bear the impress of that extreme ripeness, even of a certain petrifaction of style, so characteristic of creators whose path is on the down-grade. We cannot, as in the case of Mozart or Schubert, reproach Fate with having lowered the curtain on his revelations too soon. Much was said, and many things said with an absolute mastery which even geniuses of the first rank sometimes lack. In the following chapter I shall try to elucidate in fuller detail the creative work of Claude Debussy, and its components; meanwhile I would point out that, however isolated his art, the art of an oligarchic group of the highest tastes, and however saturated with the refined, ultra-bourgeois culture of the France of the beginning of the twentieth century; however sombre its moods and the stimuli of the creative work itself; however symptomatic from a sociological point of view, as a symbol of the extinction, the weariness of the aristocratic spirit of one of the most ancient European cultures—nevertheless his genuine artistic importance compels us to put Debussy in the highest rank of the composers' Pantheon, in the world of tone geniuses who were able to overhear and apprehend unborn rhythms and harmonies. Debussy, as an artistic attainment, is a vast quantity, perhaps more formulated and distinct than even our Skryabin, and the influence which his creative work has already exerted on the world of composers (including Skryabin) most clearly confirms his lofty position in their hierarchy.

For the value of a genius always depends on the sum total of the influences acting upon him, and is measured by the sum total of the influence exerted by his own creative work.

## II

Melos, rhythms, harmony, tectonics, these are the fundamental components of every musical phenomenon. Debussy, with his constant style, his unvarying methods, lends himself easily to analysis on these lines.

*Rhythm.*

Rhythm is all but the most distinct element of musical form. It is not difficult to imagine that the aesthetic forerunners of Debussy's creative work, of whom we have already spoken, are moulded into special rhythmical contours. And this is actually the case. His rhythms are elusive, vacillating, quavering, fluid as it were. He does not like constancy in the tonal outlines. All his music is a living negation of the clear-cut German rhythms. Nothing definite, that is his motto. Debussy creates a whole world of new, free, rhythmical tone sensations, changing fantastically and capriciously like columns of smoke blown by the wind. In his music there is the eternal 'agogic,' the eternal struggle with the bar line, with definiteness of metre; the perpetual fluctuations of tempo, which is now accelerated, now retarded. . . . At the same time this is not, as the Germans think, the absence of rhythm.

On the contrary, Debussy's rhythmical design is ever elusive, but profoundly organic and artistic. His pulsating, elastic vitality cannot be contained within the framework of four-square constructions, and he boldly breaks, not only with them, but often with periodicity in general, which in music is frequently regarded as rhythmical life. One rhythmical cloud gives place to others, different, sometimes curiously similar.

It may be that the Romance tenderness compels Debussy to avoid rhythms which are sharp, very clear-cut and, still more rarely, obstinately persistent, as is often the case with Schumann. For Debussy, undulating, murmuring figurations, serving as a lingering tonal background, are alone vital. He usually gives us a picture of supple, rounded rhythms, with nothing of the Gothic and no suggestion of a rigid arrangement. With him we hardly ever find a construction consisting of two almost identical phrases set side by side, two analogues. On the other hand, analytical observation cannot but notice that he often distributes the music in pairs of bars. These pairs are strung on an endless thread, as it were, and are always unmindful of what has gone before. This is undoubtedly connected with his tonal outlook. Every moment tends to be received as an individual, isolated sensation, like the figures in a kaleidoscope.

And the bigger the composition itself, the more conscious we are of this stringing together.

It cannot be denied that these purely rhythmico-tectonic qualities are reflected in the general acceptance of Debussy's work as something formless, having no inner structure. It is not a single, harmoniously planned organism, firmly welded in all its parts, each of which is the cause and the consequence of all the others. It is something that seems to have been created in the process of improvisation, in which the end does not remember, and does not care to remember, the beginning, and the beginning does not know where it will end. Infinite possibilities arise in this very process of improvisation. It is not the Beethoven symphony, in which the whole of the music is the consequence of its opening bars. It is just this 'molluscoid form' (to quote Weingartner) of Debussy's rhythmical structure that was particularly foreign and intolerable to German musical taste; well-disposed French criticism, on the other hand, saw in this free improvisational quality a sort of special merit, as an expression of protest against the tyranny of form, against the limitations of symmetry, against the German four-squareness. But the fact is, our artistic outlook is generally so ordered that an improvisational quality of this kind inevitably weakens the impression derived from the individual parts of a composition. Instead of supporting and mutually reinforcing one another, and thereby making for unity, the isolated passages, though the product of genius, through being strung together in this fashion often lessen the feeling of mutualness and oneness, and even paralyse it altogether. Here there is a certain difference in the actual method of listening to music, in the ways in which it is received. We may contemplate a work as a whole, and this infallibly presupposes a rhythmical and tectonic plan. Or we may immerse ourselves in the changing waves of sensations. This does not presuppose anything, nor did Debussy, in accordance with his general sensually psychological approach to music as a group of sensations, of tonal caresses, presuppose anything.

This organic formlessness, which destroys form even when it is formally present, differs in principle from Wagner's apparent formlessness—really an extremely grandiose conception of form—and from the timid school-boy formlessness of certain new musicians, who, nevertheless, are after all very formal, but unsuccessfully so; they mutilate intentionally the forms naturally developed in them. Debussy, however, that contemplator of tonal variability, had absolutely no sense of tectonics—with his creative psychology he was its living negation. And here again we have the suppression of contours, the vague half-tone shades, the perpetual twilight, the uncertain bounds, the absence of clear, definite climaxes. Form, of course,

facilitates reception, and the aristocratic hierarchy of taste must be able to receive all the scales of the sensations, the play of lights and shades, without such assistance. And we see that Debussy designedly and organically suppresses the contours of forms, even when they make their appearance in his compositions.

#### *Miniaturess.*

Such is the picture of his rhythmical life. Is he a miniaturist? Of Skryabin it may confidently be asserted that he thought as a miniaturist with the greatest ease and freedom. But laconicism is not at all natural to Debussy. On the contrary he loves to dwell long and persistently on the note of certain sensations. Of short works, similar to the preludes and aphorisms of Skryabin or Grieg, he has none. His briefest compositions always consist of several pages. Sometimes he shows himself to be not merely diffuse but spun out, as it were; this is not the *divines longueurs* of Schubert, which are due to the interpolation of whole forms born of a too exuberant flow of the springs of inspiration. With Debussy length is a means of expressing himself; the style of his musical speech is always deliberate. Possibly there is a connection between this and the prevalence of the slow tempos with which his work is filled, giving it a dreamily languid character. Even his quick tempos are essentially false rhythms, merely rapid figurations of a lingering musical speech, which is in lasting harmony with his contemplative, dreamy perception of the world. In that world of semi-darkness and extinguished lights everything flows, but flows like a lingering wave, filling up, completing as it were some vast circle of age-long culture.

A certain poetic quality is generally characteristic of him. He paints most readily pictures of modest dimensions. Here there is nothing of the grandiose; perhaps it, too, is in bad, or at least not too good, taste. He does not like to crush, but would rather lull and beguile with delicate and subtle caresses. Even his big creations are not planned on a grandiose scale ('Pelléas,' 'La Mer,' his orchestral things); they are always poems, or a series of poetic constructions. Even in the orchestra he prefers to be intimate, restricted, microcosmic.

#### *Programme.*

The formless and atectonic is always organically connected with the poetic and programmatic. In the final reckoning Debussy is a subtle 'programmatist.' This is evident from the titles of his compositions, which hardly ever bear the mere name of an abstract musical form, but give some poetic hint, outline, mood, group of images. Whether

it be 'Children's Corner,' 'Et la lune, qui descend sur le temple qui fût,' or 'Ibérie,' the designation of the piece always imparts to the music a series of ideas, of figures, or of elusive and fanciful pictures. The inherent formlessness of the music itself relies upon the symbol of speech and is partly compensated by the definiteness of the latter. This, of course, is a more developed programmatism than the embryos of Chopin's or Schumann's, and is more delicate than that of Berlioz, which is almost in the nature of a protocol. The titles themselves, typically impressionistic, are evidently influenced by the verbal style of the symbolists of the Salon Mallarmé. All these suggestions of subjects that have never existed are tinged with a sickly, languid, sugary, moonlight quality, with the mirage of somnambulism, and the static picturesqueness of the music is emphasised by these titles, almost invariably of a pictorial, nay of a landscape character. In them there is always a frozen moment, an arrested movement; the picture ('La Cathédrale engloutie,' 'Fêtes,' 'Poissons d'Or') is never the dynamics of action, and the music supplies a tonal resonance as it were to the slumbering living picture.

#### *Harmony.*

The harmonic spheres of Debussy's creative work may be said to be its most interesting feature. There can be no doubt that he originated an entirely specific style of harmony, which, when encountered in the work of other composers, always makes us think of Debussy. The embryos of these new harmonies may possibly be found in the music of Grieg and Rebikov, though the influence of the latter on Debussy is more than doubtful.

This harmonic world of Debussy's is the genuine element of pure harmony. As Laloy rightly said, it is 'harmony before all things harmonic.' It does not depend, like that of Bach, Brahms, and Wagner, on the interweaving of the melodic parts; nor is it a surface on which they are projected, as is the case with Skryabin. Each of his harmonies is a self-sufficing sensation, an individual colour or light; from these lights he forms original harmonic melodies; his favourite harmonic parallelisms—when one harmony glides, as it were, describing a melodic outline with all its parts. The absence of counterpoint and polyphony is more marked than in the case of any other composer; Debussy never thinks polyphonically. For him harmony is not a consequence but a circumscribed world, precious in itself and cultivated with special affection. If Skryabin's harmonies are pungent, nervous, ecstatic in their psychology, then with Debussy we have, on the contrary, a world of rounded, smooth chords, whose very great complexity does not destroy these characteristics. In them there is no ecstasy, but a dreamy enchantment and a sort of moisture,

a sensation of the watery deep. In general, Debussy has a variety of harmonic resources; he is not monotonous in this respect and his palette is far broader than, for instance, Skryabin's. He does not shun pure diatonism. More than that, he is naturally more diatonic than chromatic. Of real extra-tonal chromaticism he has none whatever, he is again of the scale, and his harmonies always sound self-existent and not passing or dependent. Of them we may single out three principal types.

First type—the smooth diatonic harmonies, often taking no account of the tonality and producing capricious scale combinations. This is his favourite type; it is just those moist, profound harmonies, which really give an idea of drowned cathedrals or vanished temples; of the play of moonbeams on watery billows; of soft, muffled, distant bells, sounding, not like a summons, but like a legend overgrown with the obscurity of the ages.

Second type—complex, whimsically constructed chords, possibly akin in their genesis to the later Skryabin. Theorists were inclined to see in them overtional harmonies, the artistic transformation of acoustic phenomena, or the quest of harmonic innovations on physical lines. It seems to me that it is rather a natural broadening of the conception of the ordinary chord of the ninth, which is always supplemented, filled up with new notes. Debussy's compositions are a sort of lands of chords of the ninth, fantastic as exotic flowers, and tranquil and caressing as the waves of the sea.

Third type—derived from augmented triads and the so-called whole-tone scale. Debussy did not invent these, of course; the 'kuchkisty' had them, and so had Liszt, and Wagner, and even Glinka. But somehow he was able to make them far more convincing and logical than his predecessors did. That whole-tone system which like a broad wave has flooded the musical cheap market of the 'modernists' is not for Debussy; he is discreet in the use of his resources, and the pure whole-tone scale is encountered only in oases, as a piquant harmonic condiment for another scale entity. Nevertheless these oases are significant and spacious, sometimes occupying the whole of a composition.

The employment of all these harmonic colours in an aesthetic profile, such as Debussy's, becomes possible only after a certain revolutionising of the ordinary attitude towards dissonant harmony as such. The classical canon which requires the resolution of dissonant harmonies is abolished; a harmony is not resolved but capriciously replaced by another, equally complex; it is shifted parallel with the melody, just as a colour is changed in accordance with the contour. The special peculiarity of this world of harmonies is that it is in no way composed of the usual major-minor scale, that it does not gravitate towards a

solid foundation such as a perfect triad, and all these complexities are not accepted as embellishments, as excrescences and reliefs on the body of the triadic progressions, but have their independent line of existence. Wagner's chord of the ninth is, of course, from his own point of view a dissonance on the plane of the consonant scale, whilst Skryabin regards his harmony as a pungent tone-sensation, the result of his departure from that same scale. For Debussy, however, all these are liquid colours, having no recollection of, and unwilling to acknowledge kinship with, the consonant scale of classical music. In this respect he is, so to speak, not a musician in the sense in which Skryabin and Wagner were musicians. His rupture with the past is more complete and essential than theirs, and he is more isolated from previous music than Skryabin, even in the latter's latest creations.

These harmonies are not liable to rapid alteration. With the generally slow tempo of Debussy's musical speech this was to be expected. He changes the harmonic colours gradually, indolently, and wearily, as the slowly setting sun changes the hues of the sky. He has an inclination for deep and persistent harmonies, for organ points, for certain quasi-bell tones. And they are always exceedingly full of colour and faintly picturesque, these profound aqueous chords, with their droning bell tones, throbbing with a mysterious life. If the new music in general tends to a predominance of harmony over melos and rhythmics, if its vitally creative pulse is on the whole transferred to that sphere, then with regard to Debussy this is particularly evident. The magic world of harmonies—that analogue of colour in painting, that element of hypnotic reaction on the psychics—in the creative work of the great impressionist musician occupies nearly the whole of the horizon, leaving only feeble pulsations in the domain of rhythm and melos. Debussy is pre-eminently a composer of harmony.

#### *Melody.*

His melody is elusively abstract. It may even be described as rather anaemic in comparison with the luxurious lyrics of the romantics, with the clear-cut proportions of classicism, or with the earthly, sunny brilliance of the national schools. But it is not anæmia, it is again that aristocratic repression which we find in the other domains, only here it is more salient and more obvious. The impressionist painter is essentially incapable of being a true melodist, the melodist of lyricism, passion, emotion.

If passion does speak in Debussy's melodies, it is in a suppressed, half-whispered language. Emotion is almost dumb. The composer's taste clothes it in chaste attire and does not allow any revelations. The dramatic intonations, the sense of brilliance, to which the great

art of Germany from the time of Beethoven has accustomed us, the big leaps in the parts, the dissonant intervals in the themes—all this is lacking in Debussy. The line of his tones is even, almost without thickenings, without gaps or jagged edges; a complete contrast to the rapturous melodies of Wagner and Skryabin. With these composers the musical element strives to express itself exhaustively, to say all that it has to say, to free itself from the crushing pressure of emotions and feelings. For Debussy this pressure does not exist. He has no need of clamour, hysteria, nervous, dramatic intonations. He scorns this provincial idea of 'saying one's say' with the scorn of the clever skeptic aristocrat. The intimate—Heaven knows what it is—lies dormant somewhere in the depths of his psychics; he allows us to guess at it, but never fully reveals it. We cannot conceive of a 'Carmen' or an 'Isolde' of Debussy's, just as we cannot associate him with heroism or temperament. Between his melos, with its series of measured, deliberate notes, which never take long strides and are nearly always whole-tone or diatonic; between this melos and the dreamy, contemplative melos of the Russian folk-song there is an elusive resemblance. Is this the influence of Musorgsky? The conclusion forces itself upon us, particularly when we compare the melodic progressions in fourths in 'Pelléas' with the exactly similar progressions in 'Boris.' The influence of the great Russian innovator's melodies on Debussy is indubitable, but it is no less certain that the tonal outlook of the latter is quite different, that in these melodic structures he did not feel and perceive what Musorgsky felt and perceived. Then why this substantial concord between the melos of the two composers; whence this profound resemblance, which forces us to surmise some strange contact between the melodic views of the extreme East of Europe and the extreme West? And in actual fact the folk-songs, the old tunes of Normandy and Brittany, prove to be closely akin to those of Russia. Debussy found in Musorgsky nothing more than he could have discovered in his own land, in his own national songs. They are the tranquil lyrics of a contemplative people, tillers of the soil, in close communion with nature, a people into whose soul the rhythms of the city dweller's more definite emotions have not yet penetrated.

#### *The Blend.*

But this does not exhaust the influence of the East. Debussy could not avoid contact with its dormant culture, musically reflected in the creative work of Russian composers particularly. But why go so far? As we know, Spain in its colouring is not so very remote from the sultry-chilly, torpid and languid moods of the Caucasus and Turkey. The Moors, of course, who left their age-long impress on the culture

of Spain and Southern France, were themselves the sons of the culture of the East.

Nevertheless there can be no doubt as to the part played by Borodin and Rimsky-Korsakov in this matter. The priority in the introduction of the rhythms and moods of the East into European music remains with our Russian composers. These languors, these tonal ardours, these effervescent and at the same time dreamy rhythms of the impression of life—all these had been presented by the Russians before Debussy, in his '*Soirée dans Grenade*', '*Nocturnes*', or '*Pagodes*', found for them still more attenuated and weary forms of expression. But the Russian composers in the main were always ethnographers, and this Debussy never was. The assonance of his languid outlook on the world with the tired culture of the East, that is what arouses his interest and stimulates him to creative work in these spheres, and not curiosity in face of the exotic singularity of another culture. And sometimes it seems to me that there is something of the East in the blood of Debussy himself—that lassitude, that contemplativeness, also explained, it is true, by the twilight of French culture, but perhaps having apart from this a genuine basis.

With Debussy his chaste melody, like his harmony, always remains the cult of the note. Sometimes his melody seems to be a reduced harmony, harmony brought down to a single note as it were. He is fond of unisons and employs them in a masterly manner, as a great resource of economy of means. His melody is always felt note by note and not as a blending of notes.

Dynamic outbursts are generally foreign to him; one may say that in the whole of his work there is not a single genuine fortissimo, it is always a mezzo-forte, and then never of long duration. Most of his melodies also lack the dynamic nerve; they are flowing but at the same time not cantabile. The individual notes differ little in length and force, and the whole melodic line is drowned in an ocean of inundating, engulfing harmonies.

Such are the component parts which go to make up the features of Debussy's creative work. The general design is one of unusual completeness, but of considerable monotony. Rhythm, melos, harmony, and form are blended in a picture of half-tones and semi-obscurities, of shapes that change slowly and wearily with an infinite abundance of taste. Between '*La Damoiselle Éluë*' and his last compositions very little progress or alteration takes place. Debussy's methods, becoming mature and masterly at one stroke, are carried through with that steady confidence which only those in the front rank possess. His circle of moods is restricted and monotonous but amazingly persistent. He does not leave, and does not wish to leave, the sphere in which his perfect mastery is fully recognised. Debussy knows his resources

and limitations and wisely takes care not to exceed them. And if at times we cannot agree with the general tone of his creative work nor sympathise with his gloomy and skeptical aesthetics, we must always admit that everything that came from his pen is stamped with the seal of abounding perfection in its own sphere.

### III

Debussy tried his powers in every branch of musical incarnation. Opera, cantata, chamber music, the symphonic style, the vocal miniature, the pianoforte—everything is approached by him with a certain artistic economy. He does not restrict himself to one external method of embodiment, nor to one favourite instrument of expression, but cultivates them all alike. Here again is a contrast with Chopin, Skryabin, Wagner, who selected definite timbres in which to express themselves. It is interesting and astonishing to note that Debussy, in his perpetual striving for colour, with his refined aesthetic nature which recalls the aesthetic psychology of the Japanese masters, never sought combinations of tonal timbres for his creative dreams. In his chamber music he was fond of far-fetched, very unusual combinations of the instruments, which freshen the reception. To eclecticism in his choice of forms he united monotony of style; he is always the same, whether in opera, symphony, or, pianoforte pieces.

#### *Opera.*

First of all I want to say something concerning the place of opera in Debussy's creative work. 'Pelléas et Mélisande,' though unique in his life, is a very big thing of its kind, and occupies so central a position in his output that it must be recognised as of primary importance. Just as the name of Mozart is always particularly associated with 'Don Juan,' of Beethoven with the Ninth Symphony, of Wagner with the 'Nibelungenlied,' so we shall never hear Debussy mentioned without at once thinking of 'Pelléas.'

The actual choice of the subject was not haphazard. Weary fatalism, the poetry of non-resistance, that is what this world of Maeterlinck's reflects. The general resonance is complete, the half-tone, the twilight, the bashful draping of any kind of feeling in the apparel of a whetted taste. In this work everything is peaceful; there is not a single display of strong emotion. Feelings fade without expanding and are dissolved as a poetic mist. Maeterlinck had reason to feel so keenly and profoundly the kinship of his 'Pelléas' and the spirit of Debussy's work—Debussy, who, like himself was a flower of a dying culture but was still more refined, still more sombre and, I

may add, considerably more of a genius in his own sphere. Maeterlinck's 'Pelléas' is now merged with Debussy's which, as the more powerful and magical, has absorbed the former.

*Reaction from Wagner.*

Taste, that strength of the feeble, here holds unlimited sway. 'Pelléas and Mélisande' is the antithesis of Wagner, with his heroic ideal, his cult of might, with that quality of his which the amiable Frenchmen condescendingly recognise as the tastelessness of a genius. It is clear that the giant who overthrows mountains and piles up cyclopean Valhallas has nothing in common with that taste whose fruits become incomprehensible as soon as they are brought out of the atmosphere of the cultured salon into the light of a brilliant noonday.

Debussy's ideal is the reverse; on the one hand it is an aesthetic 'menshevism,' the prudent cult of the golden mean; on the other a certain purely rationalistic underlay, typical of the French artistic intellect, a striving for preciseness, for moderation, for the avoidance of the superfluous, a certain calculated miserliness.

There is no doubt that Debussy's ideal in opera was a reaction against the so-called 'Wagnerism' in France. Wagner was quite misunderstood across the Rhine, and his creative entity, incommensurable with French presentations of art, hitting the French consciousness destroyed their art as with a monstrous projectile. They paid the tribute of a colossal respect to the power of his work, the rest of its components they did not understand at all, and they made passionate efforts to create something of the same kind for themselves. But the French frog, strain itself as it would, could not produce anything of the sort. And a healthy instinct soon suggested another way. Wagner's vast forms; his continuous musical speech, flowing not even as the mythical Rhine of the Nibelungs but like a mighty ocean current; his cyclopean structure, built of blocks of leit-motivs; the tension of his creative force which kept these blocks together in a grand unity and completeness—all these were put aside. Logic; common sense, *plus* accuracy of expression, *plus* a chaste suppression of the feelings and emotions, which were buried in some inaccessible abyss, replaced them, in a style strictly corresponding to the spirit of the French conception of the world. Wagner may say that his dramas gave priority of place to the words, and that the music was the Dionysian echo of the drama accomplished in speech, but he deceived himself. Wagner's world is a Dionysian world of tones, and that chaos is only tempered to a small extent by the verbal skeleton of the idea, otherwise it would be madness. With Debussy music and speech are equally balanced. It is possible indeed that the latter may predominate, as the element which, by its rationalism, is nearer to the

French, since Debussy's music is in a certain sense verbal. It is not the pure lyrical element, not a journey to the boundless Dionysian world. The spirit of the great rationalist Gluck, a spiritual kinsman of the French Encyclopedists, blossomed in him anew as the idea of harmony in the synthesis of the arts.

*Declamation.*

Romain Rolland rightly draws attention to the fact that Debussy's declamation is the antipodes of Wagner's and, what is more important, corresponds exactly to the spirit of the French language. There can really be little in common between that language, with its level, restrained, dynamically neutral tone and the hyperbolical style of the Italians and Germans. Music emphasises, as it were, the essential qualities of the natural declamation, and with the Germans and Italians this resulted in a maximum of exultation and rhetoric, whereas with the French it was bound to stress the evenness and restraint of the resonance.

'It is of no consequence that it should resemble singing,' such was J. J. Rousseau's idea of the French recitative. And lo! Debussy gives us this declamatory style, which has nothing of the arioso, nothing of the lyrical; which is reduced to little more than speech without sonorosity, revolving, unlike Wagner's, in the narrow circle of the middle register, within the confines of the natural intonations of the voice. The very psychology of the actors in the drama predetermines this difference of style. All the feelings are half-suggested—how different from the extreme expressiveness in speech and sound which we have with Wagner! Mélisande dies without a word, without a cry, peacefully, resigned to her fate.

Compare this with the famous death of Isolde, or the tragic sacrifice of Brünnhilde by fire; the difference, or, rather, the contrast, will be evident. The tissue of the whole of the music in 'Pelléas' coincides organically with the fundamental basis of the style. It is the impressionist manner of writing, a series of pictures corresponding to a series of psychological tints. It is the art of the miniaturist applied to the small picture. Here Musorgsky is nearer to Debussy than is Wagner. Of course there can be no question of leit-motivism. The leit-motiv is a musical expression, a conventional symbol, the pre-meditated rationalism of which had as its immediate duty to restrain, to reduce to some kind of order, the tempestuous Dionysian ocean of Wagner's tonal entities. They were those exorcising formulæ, the words with which Wagner the magician bewitched the mighty elemental spirits subject to him. In Debussy's irrational musical element, with its attribute of taste, the 'Dionysianism' is buried in a gloomy slime and all the spirits are crushed and withered; hence

there is no kind of need for such exorcisms. On the contrary, their rationalising presence in Debussy's sober element would have made his music absolutely dry and deliberate. It would be ridiculous for an ocean swimmer to use the same methods in a marble swimming basin. And Debussy grasped this intuitively and intellectually. Wagner desired to conquer, his art is subjugating and its power irresistible. Debussy, as a true Frenchman, wants above all things to please. The fundamental leit-motiv of the artistic outlook of the French nation, which always expects pleasure from art and has no idea of regarding it as a sacrifice to higher things, here found its complete reflection.

*Mood v. Motiv.*

This absence of the leit-motiv, with which music has been so freely inoculated since the days of Wagner, speaks of a sensuous approach to creation, an approach which does not, and does not wish to, concern itself with ideas. Here there is no philosophy, but with Wagner the leit-motiv is beyond question an idea. In 'Pelléas' there are only moods, whereas Wagner has few of these but, on the other hand, an ocean of ideas and emotions. The whole of 'Pelléas' is as static as a living picture, but Wagner is always dynamic, even when contemplative. The culminating achievements of the two men represent opposite outlooks on the world, the opposite poles of the psychologies of the two races.

There is no doubt that from the point of view of form Musorgsky's participation in 'Pelléas' was indispensable. In the melodies of this tone-drama there is a sort of pale reflection of the type of melodic writing which is so characteristic of the Russian genius. The resemblance is little more than formal, since those to whom it is given to read between the lines will discern in the one case a song of the rising, turbulent joy of a creative existence which has not yet emerged from its primitive, contemplative state, and in the other a legend of a moribund culture, exhausted by a thousand years of existence and sunk in the meditation which precedes its final disappearance. . . . Extremes meet and externally are often identical.

The success which fell to the share of 'Pelléas and Mélisande' was, of course, the success of fashion, chance, protest. A series of circumstances combined to secure the well-earned, world-wide fame of a work which otherwise would in all probability have had to wait very long for recognition. The exclusive and aristocratic Debussy and his 'Pelléas' were certainly not for the broad masses nor for the public; of course he was not understood, but the fashionable estimate accurately appraised the timeliness, or, more correctly, the inevitability of this appearance on the musical horizon.

Here the genius of the innovation was appreciated, and the protest against routine and against Wagner, and the provision of a national musical counterpoise to Teutonism. From these components was built up the universal fame of 'Pelléas,' which made the circuit of all the stages of the world, almost the only exception being that very Russia which contributed more than all to its creation by the elusive influence of its own youthful musical culture.

*Orchestra and Colour.*

Debussy's symphonism is of a special type. It is not the symphonism of Beethoven, nor the symphonism of the symphony. The idea of the symphony is the idea of dynamism, of a Titanic outburst embodied in tonal ideas. Only those can be symphonists in whose creative pulse is dynamism, a striving to express the chaos of subconsciousness, of the enfetterment by rhythm.

Such were the symphonic worlds created by Beethoven, Wagner, Skryabin, Tchaikowsky. Wagner's dramas are, of course, more symphonic than the symphonies of Saint-Saëns and very many others. It is evident from the whole of Debussy's psychological traits that he neither could nor would create such symphonic worlds.

His symphonism is merely orchestralism. The colouring of the orchestra attracted him by its exquisite palette. His music, be it operatic, orchestral, or chamber, is invariably static, invariably descriptive and picturesque. He gives us a tone picture and not an *epos*. In his compositions there cannot be the indispensable clearness of ideas, nor a very great deal of mood.

Hence his orchestral world was inevitably directed to painting in tones, too delicate to be programmatic, and too clever to become naively realistic. For Beethoven the orchestra is the voice of millions of people united in a heroic act; for Wagner the eternal chaos of cosmic forces controlled by the mighty will of genius; for Skryabin or Tchaikowsky a microcosm of the dynamic state of existence, of rebellious, suffering spirits conscious of their connection with chaos. For Debussy it is a beautiful external world, glittering with all the colours of life, an objective world subjectively refracted—and nothing more.

This accounts for the absence of the sonata in its dynamic quality. Debussy may have the sonata form, but the sonata spirit is out of the question with him. And we see that his symphonic works are naturally moulded into poetical, semi-programmatic forms, in every case with a poetic, literary title; into structureless impressionistic forms, in which the orchestra is not a symbol but merely the possibility of the unlimited creation of coloured effects. These symphonic works are not symphonies but either suites, i.e., brilliantly-lighted moods,

having no dynamic connection with one another, pictures, images; or simple forms—individual pictures, invariably static in form.

This is indicated by the titles of some of his orchestral creations: 'L'Après-midi d'un Faune,' 'La Mer,' 'Images' (the most exact expression of the figurativeness of his creative work), 'Rondes de Printemps,' 'Printemps,' 'Ibérie,' etc. Nowhere does he rise to the abstractness of the tonal idea of the symphony, the epic composition that has no title and no definite object.

This habit of the programmatic superscription, the perpetual ticketing of his work, which imparts to it a concrete meaning, applies not merely to his orchestral compositions but to his music in general. Therefore I shall not say very much about it here. The most important thing for us is the purely orchestral nature of his genius.

Debussy is now admitted to be one of the supreme Masters of orchestral colouring. His palette was a compound of the gastronomical taste inherited from the old French composers, with their cautious and temperate attitude towards resonance, and the colouristic revelations of our Russian musicians. The French colouristic genius, after the senseless revelations of Berlioz, which found such talented application in the creative work of Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin, and Lyadov, turned his attention again to his native land. The romantic nonsense of Berlioz and the barbaric freshness of the Russians here fell into the cooling bath of taste, and the phenomena that emerged were really extraordinary in their brilliance and entirely analogous to their contemporaries in the realm of painting, the productions of the new French masters of colour.

There can be no doubt that in principle these phenomena were connected. There was a reason for the growth of these exquisite flowers of culture on one and the same French soil. The Salon Mallarmé included painters as well as poets and musicians, and the painters' cult of light and colour could not but infect the sensitive musician, especially as it harmonised so well with the aesthetic outlook on the world of the French race. Debussy, like all French musicians, was born with a sense of tone colour—the colour quality is, of course, one of the typical manifestations of taste, that characteristic sign of the French aesthetic culture. And the creative type to which he allied himself, all his intense aestheticism, all these glittering reflections, these half-tone moods—all this required a full palette and demanded a tonal magician. And in actual fact we see that Debussy here reveals himself almost at once in the form of a finished Master, a genius, skilled in the combination of resonances and also a creator of new colours. He thought in orchestral colours.

As was to be expected, it is, of course, not at all the kind of

resonance nor the colouration which we find in Wagner, the father of the orchestral sonority of the present day. Wagner's orchestra crushes, overwhelms by its colossal tone power; it is a Titan conserving within itself forces that cannot find expression. Every sound speaks of its elemental inexhaustibility, and no mighty fortissimo gives the impression that it has reached its limit. It is an ocean capable of annihilating everything, but it does not do so. And yet this Titan could caress, could create a delicate, magical, gossamer tissue, could hypnotise with poignant, moonlight resonances. Its diapason is infinite, from the caress of enchantment to terror and Titanic exorcisms.

Debussy's orchestra never terrifies, never crushes. In him there is none of the might, none of the compactness, the dignity of Wagner's brilliant colours. He soothes, lulls, caresses, pours into the ears as it were a sort of subtle, intoxicating, and infinitely beautiful elixir. With Wagner tone as such is never the artistic aim; with Debussy nearly always. Debussy prefers mysterious, faded, legendary and fantastic, or moist and vacillating colours. He avoids definite, straightforward timbres, and saturates his music with copious exotic, pungent, unusual resonances, as original as his harmonies. His orchestra is individualised; he does not like to mix the timbres but prefers to group them so that each instrument should speak with its own voice and not merely take part in the general chorus. Stopped and muted trumpets, violin harmonics and mutes, separate orchestral groups, fantastic figurations on the instruments—such are the favourite methods of Debussy's orchestration. His orchestra is not noisy but is kept down and nearly always speaks *mezza voce*. If we search musical history for the origins of his orchestration, again we shall find that Debussy's ancestors are the 'kuchkiy,' and not Wagner. It is the orchestra of Rimsky-Korsakov, with its delicate, refined, and also individualised resonance, but still more exquisite, pungent, and subtle, and furthermore it is intentionally dimmed, crepuscular, smothered by the tonal smoke as it were. But this resonance, for all its beauty, delicacy, and taste, is unquestionably wearying. It is monotonous, with that refined monotony characteristic of all Debussy's creations. These new, cleverly exploited methods of orchestration are presented almost inviolate in one composition after another, and there is hardly one of them which could not be found in his central work, 'Pelléas.'

After Wagner's reforms, with their hyperbolisation of the personnel, after the post-Wagnerian innovations in the orchestra of Richard Strauss and Mahler, Debussy's innovation was a retreat to the plane of economy of means. And here he was true to himself, nothing superfluous. For Wagner's problems his orchestra was not superabundant, but with the Neo-Wagnerites the excess of means over con-

tent made itself felt keenly enough. And Debussy's sensitive taste at once took this circumstance into account. His scores are amazing in their economy of resources and the luxurious exoticism of their resonance. Everything is thought out and calculated, and there is no decorativeness whatever in the execution. In contradistinction to Strauss's scene painter style, Debussy writes out all the orchestral details without any regard to the fact that half of them are not heard. Here is the child of his age, a classic, treading in the footsteps of Couperin and Rameau. Impressionism in painting was a fashion of daubs, essentially decorative; the tonal impressionism which Debussy proclaims is its opposite. It depends entirely on the working-out of details. Tonal impressionism, as is always the case with music, lagged behind the other arts. At a time when poetry, painting and sculpture had begun to speak in the language of approximation, when their incarnations were merely hinting at the thing incarnated, tone painting still remained at the stage of devotion to detail. It was only the following generation (Stravinsky) that was able to give to tone a genuine impressionist, colourful and decorative quality. In this sense Debussy is the analogue, not of the impressionist painters, but of their predecessors, the great Masters of luminous enchantments, Renouard and Monet.

#### *Chamber Music.*

The colour quality—the penchant for timbre for the sake of its own beauty, as tone regarded from the point of view of colour—which is characteristic of Debussy's orchestra, is fully preserved in his chamber compositions. Unlike that of the classics and Beethoven, Debussy's chamber ensemble is never the conventional sonority on the background of which the thematic events are developed. They are the chief concern, and the sonority is withdrawn into the middle distance. With Debussy it is exactly the reverse: be it orchestra, quartet, or sonata, it is a matter of indifference to him, he seeks everywhere for sonorities, and uses the given or taken combinations exhaustively, satisfying all their tonal resources to the full extent of the type of virtuosity natural to each instrument. In this respect he displays an amazing knowledge of their capabilities and technique unequalled by any other contemporary composer. On the other hand the physiognomy of the chamber ensemble, so far as its style is concerned, is simultaneously effaced. The sonority of the Debussy quartet is astounding; it is not a quartet of stringed instruments, but some unknown miniature orchestra. Whence comes it that all the varieties of timbre, colouration, resonance are obtained from these modest four-stringed instruments alone? Sometimes it is difficult to believe one's ears when listening to this astonishing tonal variety. Now the viola

begins to sound like a distant trumpet, now the 'cello is transformed into a wind instrument, anon we hear fantastic resonances in harmonics. All this is freely, easily natural in the highest degree to all these instruments. But at the same time it is absolutely not the chamber style.

Again, by virtue of its poemism, a persistent principle with Debussy, it is not the chamber style. The chamber style, which reached its culmination in Beethoven's quartets, is first of all the cult of the dynamic form of the sonata, and after that the principle of equal rights for the instruments. Debussy is too remote from dynamism to satisfy the first condition, and he attaches too much value to the specific, individual colour of each instrument to observe the second condition of equal rights.

Thus we see that his chamber works are simply poems for two, three, or more instruments, just as his symphonic things are poems for a greater number of instruments. With Debussy they do not differ in principle, whereas a profound abyss separates the chamber world of Beethoven from his nine symphonic pyramids.

On the other hand it is impossible not to recognise that the revelations of sonorities made by Debussy in his chamber creations inscribed so brilliant a page in the very world of chamber and intimate resonances that the term 'revolution' is perhaps even more justly applicable here than to the work accomplished by him in the orchestral realm. He revealed an entirely new approach to the tones of those very instruments concerning which everything seemed to be so well known. But it is a revolution almost without a future. With the exception of a few typical followers of Debussy hardly anyone has echoed this view of the colouristic nature of the chamber ensemble.

#### *Pianoforte.*

After all that has been said it is not difficult to foresee the musical physiognomy of Debussy the pianist. To him the number of instruments is a matter of indifference; there may be only one, but he will produce from it a specific colouristic world. An irreproachable stylist, he gives us revelations of colour in the intimate sphere of the pianoforte and creates a style of his own, in complete accord with that of all the other realms in which his genius has displayed its activity. His pianoforte technique is entirely new and infinitely more remote from the tradition of the great pianists, Chopin and Liszt, than was Skryabin's. The types of passage work are quite original, and it would be vain to seek for their prototypes among his predecessors. Taken as a whole, the resonance is enchanting, murmuring, full-summed, never becoming harsh or noisy. Debussy's pianoforte is a world of

tonal murmurs, rustlings, sometimes of muffled bells sounding as if submerged beneath the waters. He introduces wide intervals embracing the extreme registers of the keyboard, and the technical methods include intricate combinations, admitting of a series of passages—figurations—completely new and very natural to the instrument. As regards composition he is always the same, inclined to forms of average dimensions, to the poetical, to impressionist moods, to poetical subjects. In his demands on the pianist he is exceptionally exacting; apart from technique he requires a special sense of tone and a comprehension of those half-tone, crepuscular and saturated elements of the musical taste of the worlds which he reveals in his creative work. Few pianists can master this style without falling into coldness and unpoetical abstraction. Like Liszt and Skryabin, Debussy needs a pianist magician, who will enchant with his playing and caress the keys with his touch. A first-class performer of his own creations, a past master of the mystery of tone, Debussy has not yet found a pianist equal to himself in the feeling for resonance. That is a matter for the future, and possibly the distant future.

His pianoforte compositions belong to various periods of his creative activity. He turned to the instrument at all times and few of his works are more imbued with his creative individuality than the inspired moments which he devoted to it. His 'Estampes,' 'Images,' his preludes, will remain in the literature of the world as permanent memorials of an absolutely new spirit in pianoforte music. He breathed new life into that instrument which has served so many generations of creators as the confidant of their profoundest and most intimate experiences.

#### *Vocal Music.*

Little remains to be said of Debussy's vocal music, since his style in music drama has already been discussed.

Infinitely exacting in his requirements of a work as a whole, a fastidious connoisseur of the literary art, he uses none but the loftiest inspirations of poetry for his songs. In strict conformity with his style and his artistic creed he is impressionist in his sympathies. His closest affinity is with the muse of French symbolism, that exquisite, refined, sage and scholarly muse, in which there is an equal blending of technique, taste, knowledge, and profound erudition. Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Verlaine, these are his poets and he supplements the magic of their words with the enchantment of his tones.

Unlike our Russian musicians (especially Rakhmaninov and Tchaikowsky), Debussy has never degraded his creative work by textual

contact with second-rate art. He is proud and aristocratic in his choice.

Only, is it songs that he has written? Rather it is musical declamation. Debussy is not a lyricist, his melody is too modest and scanty to be made into a song. An excessive sense of the nature of his mother tongue, the French language, with its slight intonational quality and its well-known phonetic moderation, compels him to avoid the lyrical in his songs. His style here, as in 'Pelléas,' is intoned declamation, recitative, perhaps most nearly akin to Musorgsky. In his songs (if that term may be applied to his vocal creations) the voice is always in the middle distance, unnoticed; the foreground is occupied by the musical tissue and the text, which is not drowned by the music. This result is achieved in special way. With Wagner the text is overwhelmed by the mighty ocean of the orchestra, but with the lyricists it is smothered by the song itself, by the very music of the voice.

With Debussy the text is in the foreground; it dominates the music and the voice. And it is always audible, even to the smallest details of the diction. His songs are the intonations of speech set to music, plus the magic of the musical tissue which envelops these intonations of the speech of half-tones and phantoms.

This musical speech, which never becomes thick and has no strong accents, flows lingeringly and wearily, hypnotising like a gentle exorcism. Debussy's songs are monotonous to a greater extent than the rest of his music, and are saturated to an equal extent with the fading, dying beauty so characteristic of him. In them there is a minimum of singing, their general features represent something approximating to artistic melodeclamation. And on the background of this musicalised speech, in the rich, differentiated accompaniment, is revealed, as it were, the whole psychological world of the text, imparting an incomparable significance to every note of the voice. In this, as in everything else, Debussy is a fully-equipped master, and never once does there come from his pen anything clumsy or imperfect. An accomplished connoisseur of the voice and its resources, his writing for it is difficult but grateful; it is always in full accord with the properties of the voice itself, and never overtaxes it by methods unnatural to it.

#### *His Imitators.*

Such are the artistic lineaments of the great 'dominator of the musical ideas' of the new France. Now, when his work is finished, it is not unprofitable to cast a general glance on the influence which this remarkable creator has already exerted on the new generation of musicians.

The power of a genius is measured by his influence. This is an historical axiom. And by this criterion a very lofty position in the hierarchy of geniuses must be assigned to Debussy.

His influence made itself felt during his lifetime. His exceedingly rich harmonic world, his style of writing for the pianoforte, his orchestral methods—all this quickly found imitators.

The most prominent amongst them was Maurice Ravel, who has now attained the rank of a great composer. His is undoubtedly a strong personality, whose relation to Debussy is approximately that of Rachmaninov to Tchaikowsky. Nevertheless, so far as Debussy's innovations are concerned Ravel does not keep pace with him. Whilst he assimilated all the refinements of style and technique, he did not accept what was genuinely new and of so much consequence in Debussy's relation to tone—his picturesqueness. In this respect Ravel is nearer to the romantics, to the tonal outlook of former days.

The remaining representatives of young France were not less affected by Debussy's influence. Even in the conservative camp many of his characteristic methods were accepted, whilst for the new generation he became an oriflamme and a point of departure, on which the new things in music are based.

The influence of Debussy's creative work was very seriously felt in Russia. It was the repayment of a debt, as it were; the return of that which he had received from Musorgsky. I cannot omit a reference to its unquestionable effect on the Skryabin of the second and third periods, particularly in the sphere of harmony. Possibly Skryabin's famous six-note chords were originally suggested by the whole-tone constructions and chords of the ninth of 'Pelléas,' which appeared long before the consolidation of his innovating tendencies. Nor can a certain influence on Skryabin's pianoforte style be denied, though his line of development here was primarily distinct from that of Debussy.

Stravinsky is another of Debussy's captives. His creative work is the living echo of his conquerings, but they are refracted in a psychology dramatically the opposite of Debussy's. Stravinsky is a barbarian, Debussy is a dying culture, dying of superfluity. That which, in the case of Debussy, resounded with the harmonies of an ebbing, age-long culture, became with Stravinsky the barbarous bellowings of a lusty warrior. The culture of taste was transformed into an elementary assertion of tastelessness, the culture of refinement into the cult of harshness. Stravinsky is the negative of Debussy, but the negative is also an influence. And in the matter of the orchestral palette we have, not a negative, but a direct consequence. Stravinsky, the brilliant orchestrator, is to this extent the legitimate son of the French genius.

It is difficult to overlook Lyadov, who did not remain indifferent to the secrets of tonal magic revealed by the composer of 'Pelléas.' And our young men (A. Krein, G. Krein, A. Lourié) definitely entered the composers' arena under the badge of Debussy, though they have not remained on that plane, which is organically foreign to their temperament.

At the present day Debussy's work has a decided influence on the group of young composers in the extreme West, in Spain, and the Northern composers through Grieg, who was closer to him, also pay tribute to certain methods of the French innovator. In England and Germany alone Debussy's influence is not felt. This is accounted for by the fact that the former has, on the whole, but little musicality, and the spirit of the new Germany is very clearly at variance with the spirit of the France of Debussy's time. Extreme refinement is not to the taste of the new German, especially as his musical psychology has been too generally crushed by the heroic creations of Strauss to leave him sensitive to the tones of 'Pelléas' and 'Images.' Even Skryabin, nearer in culture to Germany, has so far found no response amongst its people, who react only to the music of Strauss, Reger, Schönberg, and Tchaikowsky.

LEONID SABANEEV,  
*trans. S. W. PRING.*

## BEETHOVEN AND SHELLEY

IN his preface to 'The Revolt of Islam' Shelley says: 'I have avoided, as I have said before, the imitation of any contemporary style. But there must be a resemblance, which does not depend upon their own will, between all the writers of any particular age. They cannot escape from subjection to a common influence which arises out of an infinite combination of circumstances belonging to the times in which they live; though each is in a degree the author of the influence by which his being is thus pervaded. . . . And this is an influence which neither the meanest scribbler nor the sublimest genius of any era can escape; and which I have not attempted to escape.' This influence which Shelley perceived among the writers of a particular age, may well be extended to cover its whole artistic utterance, for during clearly defined periods such as the one we associate with the French Revolution, there are general characteristics of artistic expression which lead one to contemplate the fundamental unity of inspiration. It has frequently been doubted whether any fruitful purpose is served by comparing the arts, and it seems certain that if comparison is taken into the intimate sphere of technique on any other than the broadest psychological considerations, it may be more a source of confusion than enlightenment; but limited to poetic inspiration, it enables us the better to make that sensitive adjustment of individual genius and the spirit of the age. And this is most essential, for it seems that while we are prepared to grant contemporary genius its full share of individuality, we tend, as we go further back, to discount genius in favour of the intellectual and spiritual environment of the artist. In this respect the creative artists of the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries are in an interesting position. While they are far enough away for us to be able to form a fairly dispassionate estimate of their work, they are at the same time near enough for us to have relatively little difficulty in appreciating their environment and understanding their ideas and problems. In consequence, perspective has not quite adjusted them in our historical background, for while to some they are of predominantly academic interest both in thought and expression, to others they form an unexhausted source of vitality. Beethoven may be symphonist or democrat, and Shelley, lyrist or apostle of freedom.

These two men are chosen for comparison, though not entirely at random, because one feels that different as were their traditions and

environment, temperament and artistic medium, they do show in a marked degree, analogies of idea and expression up to such a point of development as Shelley attained before his early death. The differences between them are clear enough, but they do not seem to touch the core of their inspiration. Difference of environment must be taken into account, for Beethoven was a generation earlier than Shelley; he knew the *ancien régime* and developed out of it; knew artifice and infused nature; accepted form and vitalised it. But for the poet, all this transitional work was done; he was born into a world tumultuous with its new discoveries, and grew up to see reaction and disillusion. So to him it fell to deepen hope and strengthen it, to urge us to

hope till Hope creates  
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates.

But his gospel came in the welter of Napoleon's end, and a weary world could only see encouragement to continue all that had gone before. Yet Beethoven, dying after Shelley, embodied those same ideas more implicitly in his art, and was accompanied to his end by the sympathy of many, if the understanding of few.

This dissimilar treatment by contemporaries may, however, be partly accounted for by the relative susceptibility of music and poetry as media of expression. However one may raise language above the plane of daily use to embody a noble concept, it retains a certain practical precision which is impossible in music; whereas on the other hand, it seems doubtful whether words can ever capture the spiritual precision which music can convey. Shelley certainly wove words into a most beautiful and tenuous fabric, so wonderful that one is tempted to delight in texture and forget design, but the words remained. And the abstractions of words can always make an appeal to the intellect, but the abstractions of music address themselves directly to an inner perception. In this connection it is interesting to see how Beethoven and Shelley both seemed to tend towards some medium between music and poetry. Beethoven opened a new road in his art when he departed from the tradition of Haydn and Mozart which was concerned with making beautiful music, and sought, instead, to express something beautifully through music. He abandoned, therefore, the remoter abstraction of music, and even fused music and poetry in the Choral Fantasia and the Ninth Symphony. Shelley's tendency was an opposite one, working as it did towards a finer verbal abstraction, and attaining a music of words which has never been surpassed. And it was not just a music of phrase and stanza, but of feeling itself. This has been perceived by Clutton-Brock who said: " "*Prometheus*" is nearer to music than any other drama I know, and in form it is nearer

to symphony than to drama. In a symphony we often hear one movement expressing trouble and desire, followed by another expressing attainment and delight, without, of course, any expression of the means by which desire is accomplished. Yet the movements are related to each other, because the same desire which is expressed in one is accomplished in the other. There is, in fact, a unity and cumulative power of emotion; and there seems to me to be the same unity and cumulative power in "Prometheus." However, it was not because in some works Shelley sought abstraction that he alienated contemporary opinion, but because in others he outraged morality with lucidity and zeal. And this suggests a third reason by which we can account for their differences of reception by contemporaries.

Their lives show profound divergences of temperament, and they both shocked those around them, the one by his manners and the other by his morals. But Beethoven's was a small offence, and his development was followed with some sympathy; Shelley's was heinous crime, for relativity had not crept into morals, and he never saw his triumph over initial antipathy. And this again was partly due to the greater violence of Shelley's reaction to whatever he considered oppressive and unjust. While Beethoven expressed his disgust in unrestrained rage, his bitterness usually died with his temper and he fostered no spirit of iconoclasm; but Shelley wielded his reaction into fevered attack on the rottenness of society, assailed the Church, and set morality at nought. This brought him into closer contact with those whom he hated most, and year by year, he saw ghosts of an outworn past attaining a crushing reality. Castlereagh, Sidmouth and Eldon were to Shelley the murderers of a freedom which mankind had all but grasped. So he became a voluntary exile in Italy, and not content to put his inspiration into poetry, strove in his own life to realise his ideal. And he continued in conflict with contemporary morality and the institutional religion which he abhorred as the very focus of reaction and obscurantism, and as fettering what should be free.

It is in connection with their attitude towards organised religion that we perceive the likeness of their fundamental inspiration. Both of them were thinkers before they were artists, and they were thinkers of a prophetic order. Neither of them could accept formality and dogma unthinkingly, nor, having thought, could they subscribe to conventional belief. Haydn accused Beethoven of atheism, and Shelley professed it, but there was truth neither in the accusation nor in the profession. About them they saw the stream of Christ's teaching crystallised into lifelessness by the frost of dogma; they saw its glory thwarted by the petty bickerings of theologians whose minds were too narrow to let their souls through to the fullness of spiritual

life. And it was this fullness for which Beethoven and Shelley were seeking, this fundamental experience which alone could lead to ultimate perfection. Formal ritual and emotion, belief and dogma are not elements of real significance to a man whose spiritual experience is born of unfettered thought. The rationality of dogma is only relative after all, and from different points of time and place, may appear profoundly irrational. It was not then the spirit, but the institutions of Christianity which they could not accept. If one could take Xavier de Maistre's remark of the Church out of its institutional setting, it would come near to expressing the unarguable perception of individually attained faith. 'Elle croit sans disputer,' he says, 'car la foi est une croyance par amour, et l'amour n'argumente point.' Neither Beethoven nor Shelley argued his faith but just stated it, and left the statement as an ultimate argument. In a sense, both of them represent in religious thought what Dean Inge has called the platonic tradition, and concerning Shelley he has quoted Mr. Noyes: 'In the conflict between those who believe that the greater cannot proceed from the less, and thoseunknowers who would reduce even the love they have known to dust and ashes, he was with those who believe. In the long warfare between those for whom chance was the origin of this ordered and governed universe, and those who believe in God, Shelley had the most burning religious faith that had been communicated by any poet since Milton. In essence it was that of Mazzini: God, indwelling, just and good; duty that prompts to endless effort, rewarded by endless progress, while the soul mounts through ascending existences to an inconceivable oneness with the Divine.'

Professor Whitehead has defined religion as what a man does with his solitariness, and has pointed to the isolation of the great religious figures of myth and history—Prometheus, Buddha, Jesus Christ and Mahammed. This isolation on a lower plane is characteristic of both Beethoven and Shelley, and the former seems to have perceived it to be insoluble, perhaps because he never had a friend of profound understanding. With Shelley it was different, for his life was a constant seeking for one of like spiritual penetration, of perception as keen, beauorous and vital as his own. The search was inevitably futile, for the individuality of spiritual insight is inconsistent with an ultimate fullness of spiritual communion with human beings. So we see that the life-force of their work was born, not of assimilated formal religion, but of spontaneous creative experience, and they found freedom in the unencumbered myth of Prometheus and invested it with all those attributes which wait upon the more comprehensive aspects of Christianity.

The classical legend has been somewhat transformed since its earliest known expression. In Hesiod, the guilt of Prometheus and

his opposition to the will of Zeus brought on man far more evil than good. But in his trilogy, Aeschylus gave the myth quite a different form, and it is the form which we generally associate with Prometheus, the champion of the human race. The myth has undergone further changes since Aeschylus used it, but they have been changes of aspect rather than content, changes towards more abstract presentation and the emphasis of its metaphysical significance. That Beethoven and Shelley should present somewhat different aspects of the character and work of Prometheus is, then, in no way surprising; while it becomes perfectly natural when we have regard for their political environment. Suggestions are essentially tentative concerning the influence of contemporaneous events on an artist's inspiration, but it may at least be borne in mind that the 'Eroica' was composed previous to Buonaparte's assumption of the imperial title, and that 'Prometheus Unbound' was written after the apparent restoration of the *ancien régime*.

Bekker tells us of the use Beethoven made of his 'Prometheus' theme, and deduces that he would not have employed, in a work as important as the 'Eroica,' a theme he had frequently used before, had it not borne some inner significance. This seems most probable, and that he had Buonaparte in mind is clear, for the work had been suggested by Bernadotte. As is well known, when Buonaparte became Emperor, Beethoven tore the dedication from the work in a rage, declaring: 'He, too, is just like any other man. Now he will tread the rights of man under his feet, and serve nothing but his own ambition.' Buonaparte had betrayed his trust, and was no longer the hero leader of an emancipated mankind, but a direct descendant of an age long list of tyrants, and his work had lost its Promethean significance. Connection with the inner meaning of the symphony was severed, but whether this connection was ever so explicit as Bekker contends, is doubtful. He says: 'Beethoven employed three models for his "Eroica"—Napoleon, Abercromby and Prometheus; but he was interested in them not as persons but as types of the strength of man's will, of death's majesty, of creative power; on these great abstractions of all that humanity can be or can do, he built his great tone poem.' It seems that, looking back through the vista of symphonic poems, we tend to attribute too precise a programme to the symphony, and the emotional, if not the thematic, connection of the movements is more apparent if we refrain from emphasising programme, and adopt Wagner's supposition that the second movement did not relate to death, but to some other tragic catastrophe overtaking the hero, expressed in the form of a funeral march. However this may be, the symphony does show a unity of conception, and a conception of Promethean nobility and aspiration.

Turning to 'Prometheus Unbound' we notice a difference which seems due to contemporary circumstances, and which necessitated a change in the Aeschyan conception, as Shelley has pointed out in the preface. He says: 'Had I framed my story on this model, I should have done no more than have attempted to restore the lost drama of Aeschylus; an ambition which, if my preference to this mode of treating the subject had incited me to cherish, the recollection of the high comparison such an attempt would challenge might well abate. But, in truth, I was averse from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion with the Oppressor of mankind. The moral interest of the fable, which is so powerfully sustained by the sufferings and endurance of Prometheus, would be annihilated if we could conceive of him unsaying his high language and quailing before his successful and perfidious adversary. . . . But Prometheus is, as it were, the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and the truest motives to the best and noblest ends.' This states quite clearly a dualistic position, the unending antagonism of God and anti-God, and after all, it seems to demand but little more imagination to conceive the organisation of the powers of evil than of the powers of good. Moreover, it is a position which Beethoven seems to approach in his Fifth Symphony, for there, Fate, on his own verbal confession, assumes a menacing reality. And Shelley's attitude can be excused; the 'Eroica' was written before the first disillusionment, the assumption of the imperial title—'Prometheus Unbound' was written after the second, the Restoration of 1815. So to Shelley, the forces of evil must have appeared singularly well organised.

I know

Too late, since thou and France are in the dust,  
That Virtue owns a more eternal foe  
Than Force or Fraud; old Custom, legal Crime,  
And bloody Faith, the foulest birth of Time.

So Shelley's Prometheus is no triumphant hero, but the all-enduring saviour of mankind, who mingles the breath of hope with gasps of rending pain. He attains an ultimate triumph, but the apotheosis of consummated hope in the fourth act, seems more a delirious promise than an actual fulfilment. And, in fact, for Shelley, the characteristic of Promethean aspiration is endurance and a constant striving against the works of evil—an attitude which he epitomises in the last stanza of the drama.

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;  
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;  
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;

To love, and bear ; to hope till Hope creates  
 From its own wreck the thing it contemplates ;  
 Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent ;  
 This like thy glory, Titan, is to be  
 Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free ;  
 This is alone Life, Joy, Empire and Victory.

And so we see their difference in mediate attitude to the myth. To the one, the joy of creative heroism predominates; to the other the pain. To Beethoven, Prometheus is a type; to Shelley, a personification. To the one, victory is as much an attainment as a hope; to the other, more an ultimate goal than an immediate reward.

All this leads to one divergence of attitude, the realism of Beethoven as compared with the idealisation of Shelley. Beethoven had a person of seemingly Promethean stature before him when he composed the 'Eroica,' but Shelley had not, and consequently his Prometheus is at once more abstract, and in a sense symbolic. So it seems possible to perceive certain affinities between the fourth act of 'Prometheus Unbound' and the choral movement of the Ninth Symphony, where Beethoven, still faithful to a platonic republican ideal, had no individual hero in view. By 1823 he had attained a deeper maturity than the poet ever did in his short life, but there are undoubtedly likenesses. Compare, for instance, stanzas from 'Prometheus Unbound' and Schiller's ode 'An die Freude,' whence Beethoven derived the words, and partly the inspiration of the choral finale.

Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul,  
 Whose nature is its own divine control,  
 Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea ;  
 Familiar acts are beautiful through love;  
 Labour, and pain, and grief, in life's green grove  
 Sport like tame beasts, none knew how gentle they could be.

Freude, schöner Götterfunken,  
 Tochter aus Elysium  
 Wir betreten feuertrunken  
 Himmelsche, dein Heiligtum  
 Deine Zauber binden wieder  
 Was die Mode streng getheilt ;  
 Alle Menschen werden Brüder,  
 Wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.\*

\* Gladness ! lovely god-like brightness,  
 Daughter of Elysian race,  
 We now come with hearts all lightness  
 To thy holy dwelling place.  
 Thine the power binding newly  
 What our fashions stern divide,  
 For all men are brothers truly,  
 Where thy gentle wing doth ride.

In each case it is the joy of the perfect freedom of mankind, of

Man, oh, not men! a chain of linked thought,  
Of love and might to be divided not,

but whereas Shelley's feeling is so much that of hope frantically sought as a refuge from disillusionment, Beethoven's is a more fully matured and seemingly tangible joy. It is a blending of the glory of hope with the mellow experience of a Prospero, the religion of a man who has mingled knowledge of this world with perception of one beyond. And Shelley might easily have reached a similar position, for he was experiencing the incoherence of new revelation when he died, leaving 'The Triumph of Life' unfinished, and its problem posed in the last line of the fragment, "'Then what is life?' I cried.' As it is, he remains a glorious rebel, too widely estranged by the violence of his youthful reaction to attain, in the short space of his life, a true view of, and stable compromise with, reality.

Turning aside from the confessed and more or less explicit inspiration of the classical legend, it is interesting to see how far analogies of spirit can be traced in other works. That they are not confined to the 'Eroica' and 'Prometheus Unbound' is clear from the spiritual affinities of the former and the Fifth Symphony, and the latter and 'The Cenci.' In each case the later work, though only a little later, discloses a similar outlook more personally conceived and more cogently presented. Beethoven concentrated his thought and posed the problem of overcoming Fate; Shelley substituted persons for personifications and embodied his dualism in Count Cenci and Beatrice. Yet the inevitable difference appears; Fate is vanquished even though ghostly memories of the scherzo occur in the movement of triumph; but Beatrice Cenci endures all, hate-inspired lust and barren justice, and dies enduring, finding her triumph only in unflinching resistance to wrong.

In the overture to Goethe's 'Egmont,' there is expressed an attitude consonant with Shelley's general position, for it represents a man, from whose character Beethoven eliminated all unworthy elements, and whose death was not just that of a self-sacrificing individual, but of all lovers of freedom. The will of Egmont is a free will directed to good, and in the preceding overture, to Mathias Collin's 'Coriolanus,' Beethoven had represented the opposite—a free will directed to destruction. Here he depicted a character outside Shelley's range, and outside that range because Shelley could not conceive a being in whom humanity existed along with progressive evil. His evil characters are black beyond consistency with human feeling. Jupiter and Cenci are monsters, their wickedness is cut to no human measure, and they lose

dramatic intensity by this inhumanity. But Beethoven retains the humanity of Coriolanus, and lets him meet the fate of a man whose will runs counter to the good of human society.

But to multiply instances of the correspondence in general spirit of these two artists is unnecessary. This aspiration to individual nobility and the ultimate freedom of mankind is implicit in a vast majority of Beethoven's works. One has only to recall the difficulty he had in choosing the libretto of '*Fidelio*', the aspiration rather subjectively conceived in the pianoforte sonatas, more objectively represented in the symphonies, and most abstractly quintessentialised in the last quartets. And so with Shelley. '*The Revolt of Islam*', '*Hellas*' and the '*Ode to Liberty*' result from his spirit of freedom rather objectively expressed. The lyrics, like certain of the sonatas, are of most intimate and exquisite beauty, and tremble into being only in the breath of the most soul-born freedom. Their individuality is complete, and they will bear comparison only with their own images, the cloud, the skylark, and the west wind.

One other comparison between Beethoven and Shelley seems legitimate. They both developed inherited form only at the dictate of what Bekker has felicitously called the 'Poetic Idea.' And this again is a change which is best appreciated by reference to the Third and Fifth Symphonies, and '*Prometheus Unbound*' and '*The Cenci*.' Beethoven's first two symphonies were written in general accordance with the Mozartian form, departing therefrom mainly in particulars, such as the unrestraint of the minuet in the Second Symphony. The Third, however, with a very definite poetic idea to be embodied, underwent fundamental changes. The second movement was written in the form of a funeral march, the artificiality of the minuet gave way to the more human and plastic scherzo, and the finale was expressed in variation form. These changes certainly made room for the content of the symphony, but epoch making as the '*Eroica*' was, it lacked unity, suffered from a certain diffuseness of thought, and contained a scherzo which mars its emotional development. The Fifth Symphony, however, containing a different aspect of the same idea, shows some thematic connection, a greater concentration of thought, and a scherzo logically and thematically inwoven. This assimilation of thought and adaptation to form advanced considerably, and when Beethoven, in the Ninth Symphony, made his last comprehensive utterance of faith in the freedom of mankind, the scherzo went to a more logical place as second movement and choral support became necessary for the adequate expression of the finale. Of his development of the dramatic overture as adapting form and content, it is unnecessary to speak. One fact is clear, none of Beethoven's changes in traditional form were a matter of whim as were many of Haydn's, but were absolutely essential to the faithful embodiment of the poetic idea.

Shelley made two unsuccessful attempts to give utterance to the Promethean idea before he approached the dramatic form, and this was dead when he came upon it. Partly on account of this, but more because of the nature of the subject, and the poet's ambition, 'Prometheus Unbound' is widely removed from traditional form, and neither it nor 'The Cenci' conform to Aristotelian definition. But treatment of such a subject could take no other form than that of a lyrical drama, and the likeness to symphony in emotional development has already been mentioned. The changes of form in 'The Cenci,' however, are very like the changes in the Fifth Symphony. The drama clearly follows Shakespearean models, but excises any hint of 'what is commonly called mere poetry,' shows a greatly increased command of material, and powerful concentration of thought. Of a later period of Shelley's work it is impossible to speak, for the mystical and abstract tendencies of his thought in his last years baffles one, and makes it difficult to see where they were leading.

It is interesting, if unprofitable, to wonder whether Shelley's perception would have remained in general consonance with that of Beethoven. Both of them, as we have seen, were repelled by the institutions of Christianity, yet in his latest years Beethoven composed the mighty 'Missa solemnis' and Shelley could write in 'Hellas' such a stanza as this:—

A power from the unknown God,  
A Promethean conqueror came;  
Like a triumphal path he trod,  
The thorns of death and shame.  
A mortal shape to him  
Was like a vapour dim  
Which the orient planet animates with light;  
Hell, Sin, and Slavery came,  
Like bloodhounds mild and tame,  
Nor preyed until their Lord had taken flight;  
The moon of Mahomet  
Arose and it shall set:  
While blazoned on the Heaven's immortal noon  
The cross leads generations on.

This is no implication that they would ever have advanced within the Church, but it does show, and this more particularly in the case of Beethoven, that they had plumbed the depths of spiritual experience, and had formed by dissociating Christ from Christianity, an unprejudiced estimate of the sublime holiness of Jesus Christ's teaching. Both of them were artists of the most profound individuality, and Christ appealed to them, not as a prototype, nor as an example, but as an individual. And so the middle-aged Beethoven could take a Christian form and infuse the transcending glory of his own spiritual

vitality: the younger Shelley could look to Christ with sympathy dawning in his eyes.

So it is that we must regard Beethoven and Shelley, not as universal artists in the Shakespearean sense, for their work does not warrant it, but as prophets of an ennobled mankind. The works of a universal artist are bound one to the other only by the psychological development of the artist himself. But in the works of Beethoven and Shelley, this cohesion is secondary to the one imparted by their ideal, derived in part from the best in the past, and directed entirely to the noblest in the future; and that is why the elemental passions of Wagner are foreign to them. In the application of their ideal they may have been mistaken; in the ideal itself they enshrined eternal truth.

R. V. DAWSON.

## SOLO VIOLIN SONATAS

### SOME OBSERVATIONS UPON THEIR PAST AND UPON THEIR PERFORMANCE

THAT so small a thing as the violin should have established so great an ascendancy is one of the romances of musical history. Never was the ascendancy greater, the romance stronger than during those two centuries between the violin's emergence on the world of music about 1550 and the rise, a couple of hundred years later, of the pianoforte into a first-class power. The youth of the violin synchronised with a wonderful epoch. It was that time when (as Bessant wrote of the Renaissance) 'every sailor brought home the record of a voyage to unknown seas and to unknown shores. . . . when the world had become suddenly conscious of a vast, an inconceivable widening, the results of which could not yet be foretold,' and when 'scholars and poets, merchants and sailors, rovers and adventurers, all alike were moved by the passion and ecstasy of the time.' The violin, in its turn, became an explorer upon the seas of music. It inspired men to voyage with it from the *terra firma* of the old music (with its words and contrapuntal landmarks) to the new uncharted regions of pure instrumental music. A small vessel, 'Il Violino,' and seemingly frail to undertake such a journey, but well manned by the best genius of Italy. A seaworthy ship, shaped to strength with scientific perfection. Its sails, shining in the dawn and singing in the wind, were the dreams of musicians.

This early perfection of the violin was one secret of its supremacy. The other factors in its romance gathered round it with the composer-violinists, who developed side by side with their own art of violin playing, the architectural technique of pure instrumental composition. It was as if, for once, the time, the place, and the loved one were all together. No real estimate of solo violin sonatas of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can be made which does not take into account the threefold elements behind the music.

These are : (1) The achievement of the art of violin making ; (2) the achievement of the art of violin playing ; (3) the achievement of the art of abstract musical form on a large scale.

1. *The Violin*.—'The great Italian makers . . . put into the hands of performers the most ideally perfect instrument for expression that human ingenuity seems capable of devising.

' An instrument which is almost sacred through its capacities for exquisite expression.'—(P.)

2. *The Violinists.*—' There is nothing in which the power of art is shown so much as in playing on the fiddle. In all other things we can do something at first; any man will forge a bar of iron if you give him a hammer; not so well as a smith, but tolerably; and make a box, though a clumsy one; but give him a fiddle and a fiddle-stick, and he can do nothing.'—(J.)

3. *The Music.*—' The domain of the sonata was for a long while almost monopolised by violinists and writers for the violin.'

' The history of the sonata is the history of an attempt to cope with one of the most singular problems ever presented to the mind of man, and its solution is one of the most successful achievements of his artistic instincts.'

' In art, each step that is gained opens a fresh vista; but often, till the new position is mastered, what lies beyond is completely hidden and undreamed of. In fact, each step is not so much a conquest of new land, as the creation of a new mental or emotional position. . . . The achievements of art are the unravellings of hidden possibilities of abstract law.'—(P.)

Lest these quotations be suspected as bits of special pleading, it may be well to explain they were not even written by violinists. One author was a keen athlete in youth, a vigorous administrator in age: the other a man whose word was law in the literature of his day and whose character has impressed posterity as deeply as his own generation. Both were typically English in their common sense. Their names, hitherto concealed under the initials (P.) and (J.), were Charles Hubert Hastings Parry and Samuel Johnson.

The violins of which Parry wrote in such glowing terms are still in existence; not replicas, but the very instruments that came from the hands of the great Italians. Da Salo and Maggini, shadowy and sad, the Amatis with their Renaissance sense of beauty, Stradivarius, the sane and supreme artist (a Sebastian Bach among fiddle makers), Giuseppi Guarnerius (with something in his genius which makes his violins almost uncanny), and many another. These artist-craftsmen put their instruments into the hands of the great Italian violinists. They, in their turn, wrote music which was coloured by the character of the instruments they used. Even to this day the partnership is perceptible. No instruments suit the old violin music so well as the old Italian violins, and a sensitive violinist may learn much by playing on them. These violins were the first factors in the

evolution of the solo sonatas. Who knows, Corelli or Tartini may have drawn bow across the very instruments on which we play their works to-day. Sometimes it is almost as if the instruments could tell us. If they could, what an epic of art! Beginning from that first mention of 'Il Violino' (little violin) in Philibert Jambe-de-Fer's *Epitome Musical* of 1556, and groping through the works of Gabrieli (who first discerned instrumental from vocal style) to Monteverde and the other composers who employed the violin in concerted music before the first glimmerings of its independence. The finest solo instrument in the world began as a support or substitute for the voice; presently it was promoted to an orchestral position, and lastly emerged as a solo instrument. The earliest record of its emancipation is in the work of Biagio Marini about 1620,—he who first introduced the idea of ornament in violin music by using the shake. A few years later violinists arrived at the idea of producing gradations of tone, and by 1627 technique had progressed so fast that Carlo Farina—who enjoys the queer honour of founding violin virtuosity—published a collection of violin pieces which are landmarks in the history of violin technique and the solo sonata. He also made a remarkable attempt at tone painting on the violin, with disarmingly simple subjects—a soldier's fife, the braying of an ass; like Leopold Mozart a century later, he evidently had a cynical care for 'the long ears.' It was possible then to astonish easily. Heron Allen quotes Gallay to the effect that 'the production of a note higher than the upper B was looked upon as something rash, and only to be attempted by the best performers. To such a pitch was this carried that in violin solos, where it was known the high C occurred, the audience would murmur, as the crucial point approached "Gare l'ut!" (mind the C), and if the feat was achieved safely, a whirlwind of applause greeted the temerarious player, whilst in case of failure, a storm of hisses rewarded his rash efforts.'

It was about this time that the old name of Canzona fell out of fashion and the violin sonatas—the 'sound pieces'—beginning to be touched by genius, assumed their typical form. They entered with Bassani (1657-1716), the Vitalis (1644-1700) and Cazzati (c. 1620-1677). They ended to all intents with Handel and John Sebastian Bach, though Sammartini continued them in a quiet, derivative sort of way. But neither Bassani nor Bach provided the most representative examples. Bassani because he still felt the restraint of the past; Bach, because he pushed far ahead into the future. Corelli (1653-1713) was the man who first 'drew together the best and eliminated the irrelevant elements of all that preceded him.' Contemporary or junior to him in Italy were Vivaldi, Veracini, Locatelli, Tartini, Nardini,

Geminiani, Porpora, and several others, forming a galaxy of genius. In Germany were Walther, Biber (a forerunner of Leopold Mozart at Salzburg), and Bach quick to learn all that Vivaldi's compositions could teach him. Intercourse across the Alpine passes was easy between Italy and Germany, and Italian enterprise soon carried Italian music northward. France, on the other hand, proud of its own rather frivolous style of violin playing, was slower to accept new ideas. Ultimately there too, Italian influence, like sunshine, warmed violinists and violin music into vitality. Baptiste Anet and Jean Marie Leclair were among their best known men.

In England, far from Italy, violinists were rather obsessed with French models. Only Henry Purcell, the composer, high in genius, saw across the Alps, and understood what the Italians were doing. His opinion of them, and of the French School was expressed thus in the preface to his own *Sonnatas of III Parts*. He said he had 'faithfully endeavour'd a just imitation of the most fam'd Italian Masters; principally to bring the seriousness and gravity of that sort of Music into vogue, and reputation among our Country-men, whose humour, 'tis time now, should begin to loath the levity and balladry of our neighbours.'

Following on Purcell came Handel, the Saxon-Italian character of whose music has been obscured by the English influences of his domicile. Francesco Geminiani too settled in England, bringing with him the direct Corellian tradition. England itself produced some second-rank men with a happy turn for sonata writing. Croft, Eccles, Babell, Gibbs, and Collett are among them.

These then were some of the men who during the century from 1650 to the birth of Mozart were concerned with the writing of solo violin sonatas.

During this period the solo sonatas, in common with sonatas of three, or more parts, conformed to one or other of two main types of design, viz., the Sonata da Chiesa and the Sonata da Camera. As the names suggest, the types originated in a feeling for what was fittest in church or room. The Sonata da Chiesa represented a grouping of serious weighty movements, and usually contained a fugue or contrapuntal movement of some sort. In this way the old canzona continued its existence. The Sonata da Camera, on the other hand, was a group of frankly secular movements, most of which derived from dance measures. Within these two broad types of design composers found plenty of liberty. Few things are more interesting than the way in which they drew into their music for the violin the essentials of everything which struck them as good in music elsewhere. The singer's recitative and air in opera, the lutenist's and harpsichord player's ornaments, the sicilianos of folk-song, the pastoral tunes of

the Pifferari—all are there, and much else besides. In Tartini, fore-runner of Beethoven and Liszt, we even find 'the poetic idea.' It was his habit to choose some phrase from Petrarch as the inspiration for a work, and to keep it mirrored in his thoughts throughout. He would inscribe the phrase in cipher on the composition. It is said that to this day, the cipher notes are visible on the manuscripts, but their key, given only to intimate friends, is lost. Tradition has it that one sonata is framed on the words 'Volge il riso in pianto o miei pupille' (Turn laughter into tears, O my eyes); that another is inscribed 'Omnia Sacra' (Sacred Shade), and that a famous one in G minor depicts Dido abandoned by Aeneas. The most famous is the 'Trillo del Diavolo,' of which the legend is too well known to need telling.

The system of 'poetic idea' employed by Tartini is nearly allied to a system of thematic metamorphosis which can be traced in many solo sonatas of the time. This perhaps originated in an effort to give stability and coherence to early instrumental form, but obviously it is also susceptible of poetic interpretation. The original 'motive' as a rule is quite simple, maybe a descending scale, a short group of notes, or an arpeggio. In the various disguises of rhythm suitable to the tempi of the different movements it appears at the beginning of each, and quietly pervades the whole work. It undergoes little development according to our ideas of the process, and frequently seems to lose meaning in the aimlessness of its permutations. But there is no doubt the plan is intentional (it happens too often for accident), and it serves to keep the same colour of thought through the different situations of adagio, allegro, vivace, etc.

The following examples will give some idea of it. The first are taken from Sonata No. 1 of Corelli's 'Opera Quinta.' They are the opening bars of the second and fifth movements :

Illustrations for 'Solo Violin Sonatas.'



The next examples come from Sonata No. 2 in Tartini's 'Opera Prima,' and are the beginnings of the three movements. Not that the

*bass* figure in the adagio becomes the solo violin theme in the two allegros.

Ex. 3 Adagio

Ex. 4 Allegro

Ex. 5 Allegro assai

The final examples are from a Sonata in D minor by Henry Eccles, and represent the first, third, and fourth movements.

Ex. 6 Adagio

Ex. 7 Largo

Ex. 8 Allegro

Needless to say, this primitive *idée fixe* (played with by the composers as a child plays with plastocene), requires very careful handling from performers. To give it sufficient importance and yet avoid monotony is a little matter. To rightly set forth the structural proportions of movements of all types in these sonatas is not simple. In some ways it is more difficult than in the true sonata form of the Viennese period. There one may work from a standard model to the particular example. Here, in the solo sonatas, each structure is still experimental. Binary form was gradually emerging, and with it the poising of key against key, the statement, progress, contrast, return;

and the senses of expectation and completion. But so little do modern landmarks apply here that the majority of movements of that time which exhibit what is now known as 'First movement form' occur as *last* movements. (See Locatelli's Sonata in G minor or Veracini's in E minor.)

Thus an intelligent knowledge of musical form of all kinds is indispensable for the performance of these old solo sonatas. Even the peculiarities of the dance measures must be remembered, such as the heavy second beat of the Sarabande, or the differences between the Italian and French forms of the Courante.

It may not be amiss at this point to make a little digression upon the differences between solo violin sonatas and sonatas for violin alone. The terms are not synonymous. A 'solo violin sonata,' in current terminology, is one by reason of its *character*, not by numerical isolation. In it the violin is the foremost figure, the music for it written in true solo style, supported by a firm bass and supplemented by a harmonic accompaniment. This bass was meant to be played on a 'cello, harpsichord or both, figures being added to indicate harmonies from which the harpsichordist extemporised a part. The 'cello was not expected to extemporise, however. Its duty always was to play the bass.

The sonata for violin alone, on the other hand, is without any accompaniment. It is a peculiar type, for the deficiency of low notes in the violin compass and other idiosyncrasies force up the centre of gravity, and the form becomes a problem of its own in aesthetics. An investigation of the problem is not germane to the principal subject of this article, but reference must at least be made to the astounding works for violin alone written by Bach. They are in a class by themselves. No one before or since has achieved anything approaching them. Admittedly, the literature of that form is small, but many more specimens exist than are in use to-day. A proportionate disparity occurs over the solo sonatas. A mass of music in this form survives: violinists avail themselves comparatively little of it. Only the few players know many works; the many know but few. Doubtless they would deny the charge with energy, but a regular attendance at London violin recitals is sufficient to prove its truth. The same samples by Corelli, Tartini, and Eccles appear again and again with the effect of a stage army. Take the case of Tartini. He is known to have published forty-eight sonatas, and (on the authority of D'Annunzio and Malipiero) much more of his work remains unpublished. Two, yes, two of Tartini's solo sonatas are in current use, 'Il Trillo del Diavolo' and the G minor known as 'Didone Abbandonata.' One suspects even these might not figure so often if violinists did not want something with which to play in their fingers!

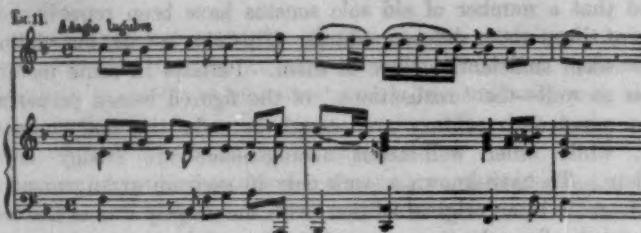
As a counterblast, it may be urged that many short pieces of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are in common use. This is quite true, and all to the good. But they have usually been extracted by their arrangers from the solo sonatas. Further, it may be represented that a number of old solo sonatas have been republished at different times under different editors. This also is true, but violinists do not seem sufficiently aware of them. Perhaps in some instances this is as well—the 'realisations' of the figured basses perpetrated in the nineteenth century are enough to make the real composers weep, while other well-meant arrangements are stodgy beyond boredom. To have known a work only in such an arrangement and then to get it in an original edition (with the shapely line of the fiddle part and the firm clean progress of the figured bass) is to have a veil rent between oneself and the past. The things which for long have troubled one with discomfort are the modern accretions or omissions. The following examples show this in a nutshell. They are taken from the G minor and F major sonatas by Tartini which form part of the set published as 'Opera Prima' at Amsterdam in 1734. Here is the original form of the second movement :



Here is the version which left the hands of an arranger. Note the weakening of the bass :



Example 11 shows what a nineteenth century violinist made of the movement in F major of which the original has already been quoted in Example 8 :



It is 'lugubre' indeed! One does not know whether to be more angry at the stupidity of that E flat in the first bar (contradicting at the outset the key which Tartini is striving to establish in our thoughts), or at the unwarranted Barnby 'Sweet and low' harmony introduced on the last quaver of the second bar.

The 'realisation' of these accompaniments from the figured bass is an absolutely vital matter if the solo sonatas are to be known in their full charm. Playing from figured bass is almost a lost art among pianists. When a musician can be found to do it well for a violinist, the sense of freedom and élan imparted to the performance is perfectly entrancing. The subject is too big to be dealt with here, but at least some idea of what the accompaniments to these solo sonatas were in old days may be gathered from the following directions. They are taken from Geminiani's *Rules for playing in a True Taste*, believed to have been published about 1749.

With Respect to the Thorough Bass on the Harpsichord it has been my particular Aim to observe a great variety of Harmony and Movements, which two things are most agreeable to the Nature of that instrument; and have given the following short Rules, for the Use of those who desire to accompany in a good Taste. They must be sure to place the Chords between both Hands, in such a Manner as to produce (by passing from one Chord to another) at once both an agreeable Harmony and Melody. Sometimes playing many Chords, and at other times few, for our Delight arises from the Variety. Whenever the Upper Part stops, and the Bass continues, He who accompanies must make some Melodious Variation on the same Harmony, in order to awaken the Imagination of the Performer, whether he Sings or Plays, and at the same Time to give Pleasure to the Hearer. It is necessary to observe that when double Notes are found in the Bass, the upper Notes are for the Violoncello, and the under Notes for the Harpsichord. In accompanying grave Movements, he should make use of the Acciachature, for these rightly placed, have a

wonderful Effect; and now and then should touch the several Notes of the Chord lightly one after another, to keep the Harmony alive. In swift Movements the Left Hand must strike the plain Notes of the Bass, and the Right of the Chords, in such a Manner as not to cause a Confusion of Sounds, else it will be most prudent to leave out the Chords. Particular care should be taken to touch the keys of the Instrument delicately, otherwise the Accompaniment of the *Drum* would be as grateful as that of the *Harpsichord*. He who accompanies should by no means play the Part of the Person who Sings or Plays, unless with an intention to instruct or affront him.

Those directions, though brief, are a touchstone with which to judge later 'realisations.' Applied to some of the nineteenth century they are an indictment. On the other hand, by their aid, some reasons for the effectiveness of Kreisler's arrangements become apparent, and they raise warm admiration for the work of Respighi, Malipiero, and Mario Corti in their recent arrangements of Italian violin music. The edition containing the work of the latter is difficult to get, but the sonatas for which Respighi is responsible are easily available in Ricordi's edition. They are models of their kind. Personally, I long to hear some violinist reintroduce to the public the charming Pastorale Sonata of Tartini, with its altered tuning (Scordatura) and its ingenuous melodies.

Scordatura required :



This altered tuning need not be troublesome once in a way. It would be quite a different matter from the uncompromising return to complete original conditions advocated by some specialists. Under certain circumstances that return might be possible, but in the *va et vient* of ordinary professional work, no player could be expected to make the changes of adjustment and pitch required. A man who may have to play Ravel five minutes after he has finished Corelli cannot afford to upset his hand and instrument in that way. Antiquarian conditions mould only the letter, not the spirit. As to the manner in which a violinist should perform these solo sonatas, a considerable difference of opinion exists. For some time there was a view (it probably dated from Baillot) that the chief distinction between the old and modern style of violin playing was 'the absence of the dramatic element in the former, and its predominance in the latter.' That may have been true as far as the gentle Corelli was concerned—Corelli, whom Handel describes as liking 'nothing better than seeing pictures without

paying for it'—but that it was true of Tartini, Locatelli, Nardini, and Handel himself is unbelievable. Tartini, with his violently dramatic love story; Locatelli, with his intense sense of his own personality; Nardini, with his ineffably expressive playing which drew tears from the eyes of all ranks of courtiers; and Handel the passionate, who fought a duel with Mattheson, and threatened to throw Cuzzoni out of the window. It is sheer folly to suppose that the compositions and playing of such men could be devoid of the dramatic element. Madame Landowska, in her book, *Musique ancienne*, goes to the root of the matter when she says, 'Il doit entrer dans toutes les idées du compositeur pour sentir et rendre le feu de l'expression et toutes les finesse des détails.'

On the technical side there is more to be considered than appears at first sight. A violinist may be equipped point-device with modern technique, but if he plays these solo sonatas without regard to the technique in use at the time they were written he will fail to get the best results. It is quite usual to hear even good players fall upon a sonata by Corelli or Tartini with a type of bowing which they fondly believe belongs to old music, but which is more like an appanage of the roast beef of old England, or a 'bright and hearty' service on the sands. Coupled with this bowing, they employ the frequent shifts and high positions of the left hand common in contemporary fiddling. This is as reasonable as Lamb going away early to make up for coming late. While it would be injudicious to renounce all modern freedom—indeed, this freedom is an aid to finesse—it is wise to borrow something of the old, simpler style of fingering. The great Italian violinists were less afraid of using open strings than we are. As far as one can judge, they aimed at broad free tone effects, rather than the closer-grained tone obtained by constant playing in the higher positions. Geminiani's own fingering is very instructive and very unexpected. That they could play perfectly well in the higher positions if they wished is proved by Tartini's advice to a pupil to take a piece and play it *all* through in the half-shift, then later *all* in the second position, and so on up the positions in turn.

As for the bowing which should match this style of fingering two hints may be given. 'The tone of the violin principally depends upon the right management of the bow,' said Geminiani. 'Your first study, therefore, should be the true manner of holding, balancing and pressing the bow lightly but steadily upon the strings in such manner as that it shall seem to breathe the first tone it gives, which must proceed from the friction of the string, and not from percussion, as by a blow given with a hammer upon it,' wrote Tartini.

Lastly, there is a matter which players of to-day take very lightly but which the great Italian violinists took extremely seriously, viz.,

the ornaments or graces. It is only once in a blue moon that one hears these ornaments played in a way that beautifies the music. More frequently they are mere apologetic knots in the musical line. On the harpsichord Mrs. Gordon Woodhouse and Madame Landowska have shown what exquisite charm these 'graces' can impart. Every now and then when a great violinist performs them on the violin hearers are equally enchanted, without perhaps quite realising what imparts this old world elegance. Harpsichordists have most ornaments at command, but violinists have the right to fourteen. These 'Fourteen Ornaments of Expression' are given by Geminiani as necessary to playing in good taste. They include 'A Plain Shake,' 'A Turned Shake,' 'A Superior Apoggiatura' (supposed to express love, affection, pleasure, etc.), and other familiar and unfamiliar graces. Some are so rooted in the texture of violin playing that at first one thinks of them with surprise and incredulity as ornaments. The seventh and eighth of the set, 'Swelling and Diminishing upon a Note,' seem like an ordinary crescendo and diminuendo. But there is a wealth of history behind the modest marks. Violin music here borrows a characteristic feat from the vocalisation of the singers of the eighteenth century. To hold and swell a note of 'extraordinary length, purity and volume' was one of Farinelli's most famous feats—Farinelli, whose singing extracted from an admirer the astounding cry of 'One God, one Farinelli.' Without going to any length of exaggeration, one may feel sure that the long notes which the solo sonatas frequently introduce were intended for some such treatment. It would be undesirable to prolong them in a manner that upsets the rhythm, but to play them with expression is surely desirable. Both Tartini and Geminiani particularly enjoin 'swelling or increasing and softening the sound' as one of the principal beauties of the violin. An attempt to understand the intention of the graces can be made to yield fresh light on the whole field of interpretation in solo sonatas.

These works of the old composers are human documents as truly as any written to-day. But, as with Tartini's cipher, the key to understand them is given only to those who love them.

MARION M. SCOTT.

## THE PIPES OF PAN

Who through whole solemn hours dost sit, and hearken  
The dreary melody of bedded reeds—  
In desolate places, where dark moisture breeds  
The pipy hemlock to strange overgrowth;  
Bethinking thee, how melancholy loth  
Thou wast to lose fair Syrinx—do thou now  
By thy love's milky brow,  
By all the trembling mazes that she ran,  
Hear us, great Pan.

—or, as Ovid tells, ‘ Now when Pan thought that he had taken Syrinx at last, instead of her body he had grasped only the reeds of the river-bed. While he lay panting there, the wind got up among the reeds with a sound like a lamentation; and, touched by this novel music and the sweetness of the lament, he said : “ This shall be my union with you for all time.” And so the maiden’s name passed to those pipes of unequal length that are bound in wax.’<sup>1</sup>

Pan, whose song Pindar was fabled to have heard, is ‘ great ’ because the Greek was, in his heart of hearts, afraid of him. The shepherd dare not play his pipes at midday ‘ for fear of Pan.’<sup>2</sup> ‘ No one may play on the pipes that I [Pan] bind with wax in the caves of Moenalus.’<sup>3</sup> But the pragmatist Lucretius knows better; ‘ it was the Zephyrs that first taught shepherds, by means of the hollow sibilation of reeds, how to blow hollow reed pipes,’<sup>4</sup> not Pan at all. And the Roman epigrammatist smiles fondly at the legend : ‘ Why do you mock me [the syrinx] for being a bundle of reeds and wax? That is how the original syrinx was made! ’<sup>5</sup>

The syrinx, the ‘ musical reeds,’<sup>6</sup> was, and is, a row of about half-a-dozen pipes of increasing length, and therefore of increasingly lower pitch, bound together by wax<sup>7</sup> and, later, strengthened by linen cross-

<sup>1</sup> Ov. Met. I 705.

<sup>2</sup> Theocr. I 18.

<sup>3</sup> Nemes. Ecl. III 14.

<sup>4</sup> Lucre. V 1,379.

<sup>5</sup> Mart. XIV 63.

<sup>6</sup> Anth. XVI 220.

<sup>7</sup> Tib. II 5, 29. Ovid in his banishment at Tomi (Crimea) sees the shepherd ‘ under his helmet, playing on pipes bound with pitch’ (Ov. Trist V 10, 25). How cold it sounds to a Roman! And is his *galea* the Russian fur cap (or its equivalent of 1,900 years ago)?

pieces.<sup>1</sup> It is a rustic instrument. 'Make your own,' says Bion, 'it's quite simple,'<sup>2</sup> though it may cost you a sore finger from a split reed,' adds Theocritus.<sup>3</sup> The wax had a further use; it apparently rounded off the rough edges of the pipes, fitting close to the lip, at any rate in some of them.<sup>4</sup> And, much more important, it was used to plug the pipes at the end and convert them from 'open' to 'stopped,' so lowering the scale by an octave.<sup>5</sup> The shape is that of a 'bird's wing.'<sup>6</sup> The instrument is found 'among the Celts and the islanders in Oceanus.'<sup>7</sup> It is possibly the 'flute' of Dan. III 5, 7, etc., which translates *mishrokita*, from a root *sharak* to hiss, or whistle. Illustrations of the syrinx are given in Stainer's *Music of the Bible*, and references to existing specimens. There is a specimen at Alesia with 5 pipes, longest pipe 5.9 inches (which would give the note c', approximately) and one at Agen, 8 pipes, longest pipe 8.3 inches. On many monuments, Greek and Latin, the syrinx is said<sup>8</sup> to have been the length of the hand (which may be taken as 9 inches), and that would give as lowest note about F. The usual number of pipes in Greek and Latin authors is 7 or 8.<sup>9</sup> Higher numbers are suspect, and a length of 20½ inches<sup>10</sup> which has been mentioned is more likely to belong to an organ.

The syrinx was much loved by the Greeks, and Grecoising Romans. It was a valuable gift<sup>11</sup> or legacy.<sup>12</sup> To break a rival's syrinx<sup>13</sup> was 'the way to do him a studied mischief.' It needed to be taken care of, otherwise it would become—at least, one did—'a mass of mildew.'<sup>14</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There is nothing to show that the ancients had these, but we hear chiefly about shepherds' pipes: the better sort of instrument must have had them.

<sup>2</sup> Bion XIII.

<sup>3</sup> Theocr. VI 43.

<sup>4</sup> Theocr. I 120.

<sup>5</sup> This is perhaps implied in 'the nine-voiced syriax with wax top and bottom' of Theocr. VIII 18, and the waxed top is at least not inconsistent with the epithet of the syrinx, 'swift-lipped' (Anth. V 206). But the main evidence for the plugging is inferential. The only satisfactory explanation as yet given of two difficult passages (Aristox. Harm. pp. 20, 21, and Arist. De Audibil. p. 804) proceeds on this assumption; See *Les Problèmes Musicaux d'Aristote*, by F. A. Gevaert and J. C. Vollgraff, 1903, p. 122.

<sup>6</sup> Pollux *Onom.* IV 69.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 77.

<sup>8</sup> *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines*, by Edmond Saglio 1889-1919 sub. *sor. Syringe*.

<sup>9</sup> One suspects the number seven, at any rate in the poets; it is too 'sacred'; it is too obviously the diatonic scale; it is too likely to be an echo of Homer's 'seven-stringed harp.' Yet, being intrinsically probable, it may be true.

<sup>10</sup> Twenty inches, stopped, would give somewhere about D in the bass. All such calculations are vague when we do not know the diameter of the pipe: the smaller the diameter the lower the note.

<sup>11</sup> Theocr. VI 43.

<sup>12</sup> Virg. Ecl. II 37.

<sup>13</sup> Virg. Ecl. III 13.

<sup>14</sup> Theocr. IV 23.

It is a 'pastoral,'<sup>1</sup> lonely<sup>2</sup> instrument, with a 'sweet'<sup>3</sup> soft,<sup>4</sup> hollow,<sup>5</sup> prattling<sup>6</sup> tone; when it came into society it was the 'boon-companion of winebibbers.'<sup>7</sup> Among European nations of the present day the Roumanians are experts. They bevel the mouthpiece of their *nai* (*naiou, muscal*). They plug the pipes with wax to shorten them and raise the pitch.<sup>8</sup> They press in the wax with a small stick until they get it to give the required pitch, and then cut off the non-vibrating end. They can also alter temporarily the pitch of a particular pipe by introducing buckshot or peas (which are easily removable), and in that way they change the mode. Finally, the intonation being taken as normal when the syrinx is held upright, they can flatten it by holding the lower end away from the body. In a pipe of average diameter the upper lip is then brought, say, an eighth of an inch nearer the opposite edge of the pipe and the note is stifled and so flattened.<sup>9</sup> The flattening may amount to 50 cents. This has a bearing on the tuning of the scale, as we shall see presently.

To understand the syrinx we ought, perhaps, to discuss for a little the behaviour of pipes. Flute-players produce sound by setting the air a-quiver, a few hundred times to and fro in a second of time, by blowing against a sharp edge—as when you blow down a key. The muscles of the lips can, after practice, direct the stream of breath against an opposite edge. In the flageolet the construction of the mouthpiece collects and directs the breath against an interior sharp edge, and the lips merely look on while this is done. Organ 'flue' pipes are on the principle of the flageolet. The mouth-organ has a collection of pipes like the syrinx, but two things are different; (1) the air is directed not against a sharp edge but against a reed which can and will vibrate the required number of times without the lips doing anything; and (2) whereas in the syrinx the length of pipe determines, mainly, the pitch of the note, with a reed the pipe has another office.

<sup>1</sup> Anthol. XVI 226, 305, XII 128.

<sup>2</sup> Anth. XVI 12.

<sup>3</sup> Anth. XVI 226.

<sup>4</sup> Anth. VII 657.

<sup>5</sup> Anth. VI 78.

<sup>6</sup> Tib. II 5, 29.

<sup>7</sup> Anth. V 206.

<sup>8</sup> This needs explanation, since it was said above that plugging lowered pitch. There are two points of departure. To take an open pipe and plug the end doubles the vibrating length and lowers the pitch an octave. But to take a plugged pipe and push the plug further up raises the pitch of its note according to the depth of the insertion.

<sup>9</sup> This experience goes far to explain a notoriously difficult passage (Plut. Moral 1,095). 'Why when the syrinx is raised is the pitch lowered, and vice versa?' is probably how the reading of the MS. (i.e., of the copyist) 'Why when the syrinx is raised is the pitch raised,' ought to be taken. (See, Gevaert, *loc. cit.*)

to reinforce the note ; the reed determines it. Hence the mouth-organ, which has no pipes, is not, like the syrinx, wing-shaped.

The flute is like the syrinx in being a collection of pipes, a shorter one for each hole that is opened ; but unlike it in that only one of them can be blown at a time. If you could blow at the two corners of your mouth like Aeolus, or had two mouths like Janus, or three like Cerberus, you could make harmony on the syrinx—at least, on a specially-made one, that was not in a straight line ; but if you want flute harmony, you must take two or more flutes. The fact that the syrinx-pipe is blown at the end and the flute a little way from the end makes no difference.

The Greeks confused their posterity by giving the same name to both the syrinx and the flute ; and we have added to the confusion by sometimes translating ‘ aulos,’ a reed instrument, by ‘ flute.’ (We ought probably to have said ‘ clarinet,’ but perhaps ‘ hautboy.’) The syrinx had no great prestige in Greece, and the ‘ banshri ’ is a low caste instrument in India. But incidentally to blow the flute needs practice, whereas a reed instrument almost blows itself ; and this would not be the only time that caste has been made to cover a certain amount of laziness.

I have seen it said somewhere that a stopped pipe gives no harmonics. But that is not the case. I tried. I couldn’t get one myself, but I watched Mr. D. J. Blaikley take six inches of common piping and stop one end with his thumb, and heard him produce, after a little effort, the third harmonic ; i.e., if the pipe was F, it gave, when blown in a particular way, c’. That puts us in possession of enough facts to discuss the scale of the syrinx.

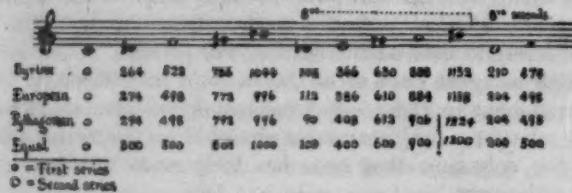
Scales, when exact intonation is in point, can be shown only by means of cents.<sup>1</sup> The European scale is determined by the necessity for harmony. Taking it as from C, the ‘ white ’ notes are the tonic, dominant, and subdominant triads, with their perfect fifths and major thirds in exact tuning ; the ‘ black ’ notes, except B $\flat$ , are true major thirds to some white note or other ; B $\flat$  is the double fourth above C. The fact that we have accepted equal temperament instead of this tuning does not alter the principle ; the major thirds (which have the greatest falsity in that temperament) are still felt musically to be major thirds ; we merely accept the falsity for the sake of the power of modulation it gives.

But when neither modulation nor harmony is required (as is the

<sup>1</sup> See, *Grove’s Dictionary*, 3rd edn., sub. voc. **Interval**.

case outside Europe, and with folk-song inside) there is no need to take account of the major third; the scale of twelve semitones in the octave can be formed by (1) a series of twelve rising fifths and falling fourths, or (2) vice versa, or better still (3) by a combination of both (six in each direction from a central tonic). This, to give it a name, is called the Pythagorean scale. It is perfectly adequate for melody, as good for that purpose as the European, and better than equal temperament.

Now to come to our Syrinx. (It will be clearest to give the scale first with the three other tunings below for comparison.) It runs through two and a half octaves—12 notes at the strange interval of  $1\frac{1}{4}$  tones approximately.<sup>1</sup>



The scale is reduced within the compass of an octave. For the next octave 1200 must be added to the cents, and for the next, 2400. There is no octave c', nor would there be, if the series were continued, c''.<sup>2</sup> The puzzle is how in the world they, in the first place, hit on such a queer interval as one and a quarter tones, and, in the second, maintained it so consistently.

The explanation has been put forth by Herr Erich v. Hornbostel of Berlin, in a book by Koch-Grünberg called *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern*, 1910, vol. ii, p. 378, and in several pamphlets, in particular one called 'Musikalische Tonsysteme,' being a reprint from the *Handbuch der Physik*, vol. viii, pp. 425-449. He established this as the scale played on Panpipes, heard in two places that could not possibly have had any connection with each other—Melanesia, and the sources of the Amazon—measured, and studied; the scales were identical. He quotes other instances, and in these the interval varies a little, but it is beyond doubt that the interval aimed at is  $1\frac{1}{4}$  tones in all of them.

The foundation of the scale is the fourth, upwards. This is arrived at by starting with a small pipe, blowing its third harmonic, and then cutting another pipe to give the double octave below that harmonic,

<sup>1</sup>  $1\frac{1}{4}$  tones exactly would be 255 cents.

<sup>2</sup> That is to say, the scale is not re-entrant at the octave. But it is practically re-entrant at the tenth octave. If we continue the series of blown-fourths to the 23rd place we get  $522 \times 23 = 12006$ , which is practically ten octaves ( $1200 \times 10$ ).

in other words, the fourth below the proper note of the original pipe. Thus starting with 474, the *highest* note, we get a series of rising fifths and falling octaves, i.e., of falling fourths. Or rather, we should get that. But on a pipe blown at the end it is difficult to get the third harmonic true. In practice it comes out flat, and by a definite average amount—24 cents. The fifth, therefore, which should be 702 sounds as 678; and the fourth, in consequence, instead of 498 is 522. And so, if we start at the *lowest* note (264) of the series and continually add 522 we get the series, 264, 786, 108, etc., of these 'blown-fourths.'

That accounts for the even numbers, and now for the odd (which we call the 'second series.') The question is, how was the 210 found that stands between the 474 and the 1152 (the D between the F and the B $\sharp$ )? We see that it is practically midway,

$$\text{since } 1674 - 1410 = 264$$

$$\text{and } 1410 - 1152 = 258.$$

(1) It would have been impossible to judge the interval by the *sound*, since there is no means of telling, by the ear only, that a semitone at one pitch is or is not the same 'size' as a semitone at another.

(2) We may think therefore that he might have measured accurately *with the eye* a length exactly halfway between the two pipes. But a little sum will show that that would not give the middle note.<sup>1</sup> So there must be some other way of arriving at 210.

(3) If we start at 474, and continue the series of blown-fifths (=678) downwards to 12 places we get

$$474 + (678 \times 12) = 8610 = 8400 + 210$$

210 represents therefore the 12th<sup>2</sup> blown-fifth.

<sup>1</sup> Suppose the highest pipe (F) to be two inches long, as it quite possibly is (since the lowest is given as nine inches, sounding 366 vibrations). Then the B-sharp pipe (if of the same diameter)

is  $\frac{1674}{1152}$  of F-pipe = 2.91 inches.

The difference in the lengths = .91 inches.

Half that = .455 inches.

Length of D-pipe =  $2 \cdot .455$  inches.

2000  
The note D = — of 1674 = 1363.  
2455

i.e., the note D, in its proper octave, is 163 instead of 210; in other words, to divide the pipe-length is not to divide the interval.

<sup>2</sup> We need not suppose that one player went on cutting pipes till he reached the twelfth fifth below, because that would mean the impossible compassa of seven octaves. One player may have taken a note of the series from another, slipping back an octave whenever he wanted to.

The second series can now be intercalated with the first—

	D $\sharp$	G $\sharp$	D $\flat$	G $\flat$	B $\sharp$	F
First series	264	786	108	680	1152	474
Second series	... 0	522	1044	366	888	210
	C	F	B $\flat$	E	A	D

and that gives our scale. It is logically constructed by the only means at his command, and, impossible as it sounds to European ears, it gives an excellent melodic scale, so long as rise and fall merely is aimed at, and harmony does not enter in.

That is the scale of the syrinx, found in all parts of the earth; the scale that arises naturally out of the conditions. But there is no reason, of course, why somebody should not make a syrinx to-morrow and give it any scale he pleased. It is extremely unlikely that Aristotle and others, who discussed the syrinx (meaning the Panpipes and not the flute) seriously, should have been considering a scale so entirely different from their norm as this is, to be a real part of music; and it is certain that the Roumanian peasants could not have maintained such a scale in harmonised Europe. But the interesting moment about all investigations of instruments is when we can show that a particular form of the sound-producer affected the style of the music. We are well aware in our own century of the effect that the pianoforte has had on style. In the century before that it was the flute; before that the lute; Irish song is different from English partly at least because of the harp that hung in Tara's halls. Behind these again are the almost universal bagpipe (to which we may trace, among other things, the rule so rigidly kept for centuries in the Ecclesiastical music, that a melody should close on its final from the whole-tone above), and the instrument we have been discussing.

For this discovery of Herr v. Hornbostel's goes much further than the Syrinx, which, after all, would have only a mild interest for us, since we shall probably never hear and shall certainly never play it. It explains the Chinese<sup>1</sup> scale, which has puzzled everyone till now, as well as scales of Burmah, Siam and Java. Those however are not our business now. The object of this article is attained if it has made clear to a few readers whose mathematics may, like the writer's, not go far beyond simple arithmetic, what the question is and where to find the answer.

A. H. FOX STRANGWAYS.

<sup>1</sup> The Chinese say that their scale came originally from fifths blown on pipes; they call the alternate notes of their scale 'male' and 'female' (our first and second series); and, like the Syrinx scale, theirs contains no upper c' (though it does, for a reason that cannot be gone into here, contain a c").

## MUSIC AND THE CINEMA

SPEAKING at a recent dinner of the Musicians' Club of London Dr. Malcolm Sargent referred to certain words of disparagement pronounced against brass bands. 'If they played bad music,' he said, 'it was largely because the better class musician had not tackled the problem of giving them good music.' In other words, for the shortcomings of that popular institution the better class musician must bear his share of responsibility. How much greater is that responsibility if the argument is transferred to a still more popular institution, with vastly greater potentialities, the cinema. It is estimated, on the basis of union statistics, that picture theatres, great and small, are now providing between three-quarters and four-fifths of the paid musical employment in the country. It is further estimated, though on data less subject to verification, that the cinema is the sole, or at any rate the chief, avenue by which music reaches three-quarters of the potential audience in the population. For about fifty-nine hours weekly, music is being performed in upwards of three thousand cinemas, and for shorter periods in perhaps a thousand isolated halls. Setting aside all aesthetic considerations in favour of a purely objective view, one may say that the cinema is at present the most important musical institution in the country. Yet, whenever 'better class musicians' find occasion to refer to cinema music, it is invariably in terms of disparagement compared with which those recently applied to the brass band were the mildest expostulation. And, even more than in the case of the brass band, a large share of responsibility for the undisputed evils of cinema music rests upon the class of musicians from whom these facile denunciations usually emanate. Had they not, as a class, been so anxious lest they defile themselves by contact with the despised institution, there might have been a different story to relate.

It is not disputed that, like many other modern inventions, the cinema was kidnapped in its perambulator, or that its early tutors were of a type scarcely susceptible to aesthetic influences. Unfortunately, so far as music is concerned, it was abandoned to its fate. Not only was the potentially fertile ground yielded without a struggle but it was treated as a plague spot. Professors warned their students against the contamination of the cinema, remonstrated with them, or even dismissed them from their colleges if they were tempted to accept

an engagement in a picture theatre though the motive might be—and in some instances was—that of providing for the continuance of their studies. To this day organists are told that they lower the high standards of their profession if they seize the opportunity of appealing to a larger audience,\* despite the obvious possibility that they may, with discretion, help to spread the light. The undeclared policy has been to place the cinema out of bounds, and then reprove it for being there—to put obstacles wherever possible in the way of ‘better class musicians’ who were tempted to enter this field, and then point to it as being peopled by those having no claim to be thus described—to hold aloof, making no attempt to meet any of the needs engendered by this new form of entertainment, and then deride it on the ground that those needs have been met by musicians of less lofty pretensions. Better class composers made practically no attempt to provide suitable music, and they or their friends are now virtuously contemptuous of that which they find doing duty instead. It would, of course, be absurd to infer that better class music would have entered the cinema by the simple process of knocking at the door. Not without a struggle would it have forced its way into a sphere so beset, from its inception, with meretricious influences. That the struggle need not have been a hopeless one is proved by the remarkable amount of good music that has, in spite of all, found its way into the cinema. But it was allowed to go by default.

One consequence of this abstention has been the creation of the most conservative of all vested interests, that inherent in an established mode of procedure. Like all new inventions, the cinema began with adaptation. Just as the earliest railway carriages adapted the shape of the stage coach, the earliest motor cars that of other horse-drawn vehicles, and both only gradually evolved the now familiar types, the cinema began by adapting almost everything that lay within reach. Yet even its earliest sponsors were fully aware that it must inevitably develop on its own lines and create an independent technique such as has now emerged from the crudities of early efforts. Though adaptation still clogs the progress of the film, so much has been accomplished that the existence of an ‘art of the screen,’ with an independent future before it, is no longer questioned. It was, or should have been, obvious that in the music of the cinema the stage of adaptation was similarly primitive, and that a new form corresponding to music drama was the goal towards which, however remote it may have then seemed, the efforts of pioneers must tend. But, in

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the absence of musical pioneers, adaptation has developed a technique of its own which, crude as it may seem to its outside critics, nevertheless demands no inconsiderable skill on the part of those who exercise it, especially when the conditions of their vocation are considered. In the 'fitting' of a film which is the principal item in a cinema programme it is nowadays usual to draw upon more than a hundred compositions, some excerpts being recurrent, more or less after the manner of leitmotive—and even, in some instances, subject to analogous metamorphosis—whilst the others are employed to accompany passing incidents or moods. In dealing with important productions there is now a growing tendency to have this done before marketing the film, in which case the musician may have reasonable time to collect his thoughts. But this course is still exceptional. Usually the question is deferred to the 'trade show,' when the publicity manager, in whose province this preliminary exhibition falls, bethinks himself of the need of music and appoints someone to provide it, commonly at a few days' notice. This gentleman sees the film once, and is given no orchestral rehearsal. Latterly it has become customary to pass his suggestions on to the eventual exhibitors, whose own conductors may or may not have the music in their libraries. Even this is not a general practice, and the musical director of a picture theatre must still be prepared to improvise at a few days'—sometimes a few hours'—notice, a pot pourri of a hundred ingredients that shall more or less fit incidents occupying from an hour to an hour and a half. It is a task demanding first of all a capacious memory, the time being insufficient to ransack the library; then an alert sense of dramatic effect, rapid decision, resourcefulness and ingenuity, and a sense of humour that can be summoned or silenced at will. And in this intricate task the leading cinema musicians have developed an almost uncanny slickness. Of course, judged by any æsthetic standard, it savours of barbarism. But any impartial observer, reviewing the cinema from its own angle as a popular entertainment, must cheerfully admit that these men make the best of what is, seen from any other angle, a bad job. The trouble is that this practical slickness, constantly exhibited, and satisfactory to the audience for whom it is intended, is now an established craft, with, as stated above, that form of conservatism which appertains to technical experience. Years ago the cinema community might have been impressed with the views uttered by eminent musicians upon the possibilities of this new field. To-day, confident in their own technical experience, their retort to any outside musician, however world famous, is 'What does he know about it?' He does not share that experience, and therefore his views are irrelevant. It was difficult enough, when the cinema was in its infancy, to convince its sponsors that it should develop its music at first hand. To-day any suggestion of the kind—such as Richard

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Strauss recently put forward—is promptly met with the reply that original music would prove, not more, but less satisfactory, for a variety of reasons, the first of which is that the method would lack the skill of the present adaptors, and the substance would lack the appealing quality of the music which is their present stock in trade. There are other reasons, but as they arise from the routine of film making, which after all is not as the laws of the Medes and Persians, they need not detain us here.

There is, however, one obstacle that may yield to the pressure of mechanical competition. Hitherto a powerful objection, not only to original music, but even to a carefully considered and skilfully joined adaptation prepared at the source of the film has been that, after all the trouble involved, it was still at the mercy of the exhibitors, a large proportion of whom were impervious to any consideration not directly measurable by the box office returns. They would reduce the best intended efforts to naught by failing to provide adequate means of performance, and generally refusing to regard the music as other than an irksome tax upon their business. The advent of the sound film confronts them with the only argument likely to affect them: that of reduced trouble and expense. To-day we have already adapted film settings, synchronised with the films, and reproduced by such devices as the Vitaphone or the Movietone which, with all their obvious shortcomings, are even now preferable to inferior playing by an incomplete team, and may be improved beyond expectation before we are much older. Moreover the circumstances attending the preparation of the music ensure a degree of skill that is not otherwise available to every exhibitor. For the present the vested interest of the adaptor monopolises the new devices, but their dissemination necessarily creates a vehicle, such as has not hitherto existed, for the eventual music drama of the screen, should it ever triumph over the other obstacles in its path. Nor are these the only developments that make for progress in the direction of original film music. At Baden-Baden, in the summer, a film was shown with original music by Paul Hindemith which was performed by means of a perforated roll, synchronised with the projector, upon an instrument of the piano-player type. The pneumatic mechanism operated by the perforated roll is also capable of being installed in organs, a recent type of which has become an almost indispensable adjunct to the cinema. This mode of mechanical reproduction has over the other the advantage that it performs upon an actual musical instrument, and therefore produces a first-hand tone. And there is the Duo-Art to prove that its results need not aggressively evoke the robot.

It may seem a counsel of despair to look to mechanical aids for the reclamation of the cinema as a field of creative musical effort, but the

other alternatives appear less promising. True, we have had a few films provided with original music. There was the one based upon the Nibelungen-Lied—though, to be sure, a well known film critic remarked how well Wagner's music fitted it!—and we have had 'Metropolis' and 'Berlin,' the latter being conceived as a film symphony, the result of direct collaboration between producer and composer. But, with all deference to the musicians responsible for these attempts, they were not of a nature to carry such conviction as would break down the present barriers. 'Berlin,' for instance, was so completely lacking in the lyrical element that it actually estranged as many as it converted. It is not by such means that the lost ground can be reconquered. The public—which in this sphere is almost identical with the population—knows the music it wants, though it may be incapable of describing it, and in that music the lyrical element is indispensable. The film music drama that will eventually throw open the gates to original composition must obviously be one that appeals to the public for which it is intended. At this point we may echo a passage which Harvey Grace has already quoted in a similar connection from Chesterton. Writing upon Dickens the latter asks leave to examine the fashionable statement that the public likes bad literature, and proceeds thus: 'The public does not like bad literature. The public likes a certain kind of literature and likes that kind of literature even when it is bad better than another type of literature even when it is good.' The successful pioneers in this field will be those who, accepting this wise observation as applicable to all art, will give the cinema public music of the kind it likes, but of a better quality and a more complete fitness than that to which it is accustomed. Despite the constant—and sometimes bathetic—use of familiar classics, to which the adaptors point with pride, the task should not be one of insuperable difficulty. And if it should appear an irksome one, may one offer a reminder that it took many generations of opera makers to prepare an audience for *Tristan*, although there was an aristocratic patronage?

EDWIN EVANS.

## RELIGIO MUSICI

SIR THOMAS BROWNE begins his *Religio Medici* thus: 'For my Religion, though there be several circumstances that might persuade the World I have none at all (as the general scandal of my Profession, the indifferences of my Behaviour and Discourse in matters of Religion, neither violently Defending one, nor with that common wisdom and contention Opposing another); yet, in despight hereof, I dare without usurpation assume the honourable stile of a Christian.' This is still true of most of us musicians, but to-day we should not define religion as Browne defined it, nor see it as a small fenced-in fold wherein some sheep fed while others were in other folds, perhaps fed, perhaps hungry, perhaps all destined to share a common end—how can the sheep tell? If we are to speak any new things about those ancient words, religion and music, we must clear a little space round them in which we can move.

Religion has ceased for nearly everybody of my generation to have the particular significance of dogma. Of all those who have views about the Prayer Book, only a very few could explain, or even understand, the rival theories of the debated parts. To most of us it has ceased to mean church-going, except for a casual baptism, wedding or funeral. But we have a feeling that years ago it provided an outlet for a kind of something, a 'ghostly' something, a spiritual something, in us that wanted exercise and release. Perhaps we got it out of the music, out of the architecture, out of the prose of Psalter and Bible, very rarely out of the sermon. What is happening now? Did we lay in a store of it in our 'teens so that we live on it now, or has something else come to take its place? What does religion imply to us now? I think it implies that we continue to do our best in our job for no other reason than a dislike, which has become inherent in us, of not doing our best, because it is an inferior thing to put out inferior work. The heathen may do such things, but not we who have been called to do the thing well.

Gradually that form of religion which is organised into the Church, is recognising, very slowly, that good men's minds are preoccupied with many concerns which are totally non-material, absorbing, and yet unconnected with organised religion. They, the bishops and clergy, recognise that they are not the only hierophants of the mysteries. There must be something to explain the selfless devotion

to work of the artist, the poet, the composer, the researcher, whose gains for themselves are so small compared with their gifts to posterity, whose unconsciousness of their devotion to duty is so marked, whose lives are so clearly dedicated to their one great object.

In fact music, for let us come to grips with music in particular, provides many people with that outlet of self which they desire, and in music they can find it in as rich and varied profusion as they can in the churches. Have we not intellectual and emotional music, have we not music which is charged and overcharged with every kind of appeal to auditory stimulus, and music that is as bare as the unfinished walls of a church? But it is not so much with the listeners that I feel myself concerned; it is with the makers. Are we plain tradesmen whose job is music, and about whose souls it is someone else's business to care, or are we among the hierophants? We are tradesmen in the sense that we must learn to do our job and not just talk about it, we are tradesmen in the sense that it fits us best not to attempt to move in society, or to live 'up to our position.' We may be tradesmen in those senses, and in a trade you may be able to work with your mind elsewhere while your hands function of themselves, that, too, we have known in music. But at some time or other there must have been, and there must be repeated, that experience, that vision which makes us for ever hierophants to the world which has *not* had that experience. That has been our call, our dedication. Our failures are sins against our high calling, but who can imagine a confession based on such insignificant trifles as carelessness in that difficult passage three bars after letter C, inattention at practising, lack of concentration at the performance whereby something nearly went wrong—what a tale of faults there are unconfessed: we have no Master to confess to, we have only ourselves.

Are we not also missionaries, do we not believe in music in other than purely financial terms? When Sir Henry Coward denounces jazz, it is with the same zeal for the truth that made Stevenson denounce the detractor of Father Damien, the same zeal with which Sir Arbuthnot Lane denounces the vendors of patent purges and poison-preserved foods—the zeal that hates to see mankind plunging down the track of the wrong idea. We may think that our missionaries are not always wise, that if the saxophone and the brass band are instruments of Satan it is our business to rout Satan with his own inventions and win over jazz and brass bands to our idea of righteousness, not to proclaim them as things from the Cities of the Plain.

And we humbler folk, are we not moved by the feeling that we are, as performers, mouthpieces of a much mightier thing than our-

selves, that cannot be spoken of in easy words? Is it an unusual experience for us after a performance which we know has not been our best, to hear people say to us what a wonder it has been, how moving, and so on, with complete sincerity, while we have to confess a chain of misdeeds which is little better than deplorable. How much better it would have been if we had been at our best too.

Is not this worth calling a religion, can it not stand its trial as an attempt to bring into this world the call of the Highest, to make us turn for comfort and inspiration to a tune that will brace us to play the man? The Catholic Church did, perhaps, better than it knew when it associated solemn moments with the smell of incense. How many men and women passing by a church have their minds brought back to some solemn things by the smell of incense that comes out; for smell touches us more directly, more immediately, than any other sense. Are we not prophets of the new world because we bring to every man the chance to employ his leisure in a good way, and to fill his mind with a store of good things to draw on as antidotes to the poison of this world. Some people whisper a prayer, others whistle a tune; if they both have the same result, which is the inferior? Such things must be judged by the hearts from which they came.

I have one more apology to offer—an apology for anonymity. If I were a bishop or a dignitary in music I would make this *apologia pro arte mea* without fear, but from one of the rank and file these confessions of hope come best when they are not mixed up with failure. It is for such as us to show that, like Chaucer's Poor Parson :—

This noble ensample to his sheepe he yaf  
That first he wroghte, and afterward he taughte.

MUSICUS.

## PETER BENOIT *né* PIERRE BENOIT

### I

NOBLE men have sacrificed their money and, which is nobler still, their lives for their ideals; but the sacrifice of fame is a rarer and far more curious case of unselfish devotion to a noble cause. This is the sacrifice which young Pierre Benoit made, when at the age of 23, having won 'Le Prix de Rome' he resolved henceforth to be Peter Benoit, a plain Flemish artist, one who would have no further claim on French influence, one who could expect no help, but only indifference and perhaps even hostility from Paris! And what difference is there, pray, between Pierre Benoit, and Peter Benoit [Be-nó-it]. Well, there is the difference that Pierre Benoit is a Frenchman and comes under French protection, Peter Benoit is a Fleming and comes under no protection, not even Dutch protection. And the word of Paris was mighty in his days: it could bid a composer 'God-speed' as no other protector could; it could spread his fame, or retard it, better than the best American advertising agency. Wagner bent the knee to Paris. But Benoit deliberately cut himself off from Paris sympathy as no other composer who had the opportunity ever had done, and, what is much to the point, he, being a Fleming, could realise far better than any man of other nationality what it would cost a composer to turn his back on the Paris art world. He knew well too, that to stay at home and fondle the head of the 'Lion of Flanders' was not even a safe way to the hearts of the influential faction in Belgium, for most of the important people there are pro-French. Even to the present day there is a sort of Norman and Saxon rôle played as between Walloon and Fleming, or 'Franschgezind' and 'Vlaamschgezind.'

Benoit was a Fleming and he highly resolvéd to remain one in all things, especially in music. Béranger said:—

J'aime qu'un Russe soit Russe,  
Et qu'un Français soit Français.

but he did not add 'et qu'un Belge soit Flamand.' Paris did not treat Benoit badly; on the contrary. But if you write long cantatas and oratorios with vast and vague solo characters like the Daughter of the Spire of the Cathedral of Antwerp, and the Spirit of the Son of the

River Schelde (which to the Frenchman is in any case L'Escant), if you write such cantatas you may be sure that a Frenchman is going to find your *Fille de la Flèche de la Cathédrale d'Anvers* rather funny; and when a Frenchman finds anything funny you may be pretty sure he'll tell the world, and that in rather well-chosen terms. But Gounod and Délibes praised 'Lucifer' highly. The former, after hearing that oratorio, is reported to have said 'c'est le pinceau de Rubens,' as nice a compliment to Benoit as Bernouilli's 'leonis unguem!' was for Sir Isaac Newton.

Benoit, however, was uncompromising; he showed plainly that French ideals in music were not his ideals. Also he opposed cosmopolitanism in music, and here his great antagonist was Anton Rubinstein. Clever with his pen he was continually writing articles in which he claimed that Flemish music should be written only to Flemish words. Flemish music was to be Flemish, lock, stock, and barrel. His own music was composed, he said, to catch the tone-feeling of these dearly-loved Flemish words. Only in the case of the oratorio 'Lucifer' did he seem reconciled to a performance in French. That the Devil was a Fleming, only to be heard to genuine advantage in the Flemish language, did not appear to him to lend unqualified distinction to his cause. One can imagine French comment 'Mais voyons donc; c'est vrai alors; le Diable n'entend que le flamand!' And how Rubinstein would have mocked. Flemish School of Music; why, he would not even hear of a Russian School of Music—the school of Glinka which led to Balakireff, Rimski-Korsakoff, Moussorgski, Skriabin, Stravinski, and Glazounov.

Now Peter Benoit, though a good writer and controversialist, was not a great writer. His ideas were accepted whilst he was ignored. This is the fate of every original thinker who has not at his disposal memorable words, and marbled phrases. His fate is that of an inventor who is not rich enough to take out patents. But the more one considers his case the more it would seem that he was the fountain head of nationalistic music which has since so flourished in Spain, Hungary, Russia and Finland. It may be that in some of these countries pride has hurried forward the movement, and to some extent lessened its truthfulness; but with Benoit it was deep intuition, not pride, which made him seek to express himself along racial lines. He was a modest champion of national music, 'Al ware onze Kunst nog zoo bescheiden, al stond zij nog verre beneden uitheemsche kunsten, dat ze weze, wat zij kan, wat ze moet, het is de onze en we hebben haar lief.' . . . 'Mijn Vaderland is mij niet te klein,' (Were our art ever so modest stood she far, far below foreign art, let her be what she can, what she must be; she is ours and we love her. . . . My Motherland is not too small for me.) And his example

more even than his writings must have influenced musicians in other lands to be brave and stand or fall on the merits of that music which was their natural heritage. Benoit fell perhaps! He was a prophet without honour, save indeed in his own land. The musicians of Spain, Russia, Hungary, and Finland are now comfortably following the trail to fame blazed for them by this honest, sturdy Fleming. But perhaps I am hasty. Fame keeps very late hours, she may yet give him audience. Born on August 17, 1834, he died on March 8, 1901, and it is on these dates (as nearly as can be managed) that the Peter Benoit-Fonds Society gives its magnificent performances of some of his works. One cannot blame the French for not making any special effort to keep alive his name and works, but one may blame the Germans. 'Lucifer' and 'The Rhine' have both been performed in Germany, the Rhine should have made special appeal to them and I believe it did so at the time, but they have forgotten too soon. The Dutch gave him full recognition and made him officer 'der Nederlandsche Orde van Oranje-Nassau.' The French made him a corresponding member of the Institut de France, and the Belgians member of the Royal Belgian Academy and conferred on him the title Commander of the Order of Leopold. The attitude of France, all things considered, was astonishingly considerate, for the French of all people hate anything in the nature of an oratorio, and Benoit's works were all oratorios. And here, again, I seem to see evidence of Benoit's spirit of sacrifice; he handles the orchestra so well in these oratorios that he could surely have had little difficulty in writing symphonies. But no, the Flemish language had to come in somewhere, so he wrote music for oratorios in Flemish, a language as one French critic remarks, 'à peu près aussi répandue que le bas-breton.'

Surely he could measure the risk he was taking in so confining his works. It is an arresting feature of this Flemish Master's music, that wherever it describes water, *i.e.*, river, sea, or lake, but especially river, its descriptive beauty and truthfulness become such as to call forth special praise from the most widely different critics. The French said of the Schelde motif: 'Voilà de la netteté, voilà de l'enchaînement logique! Tout ce que l'Eau chante est délicieux et d'une fraîcheur printanière . . . une cadence très finement ciselée.' The Germans saw this music as (of course) 'grossartig . . . der warme Pulsschlag eines tiefempfindenden Herzen,' etc. In London, 1889, *The Times* critic, who is otherwise frankly hostile to 'Lucifer,' says: 'Where Lucifer is borne by the wind over a calm sea the handling of choir and soloists is really impressive.' *The Daily Mail Gazette* speaks of the water melody as a 'popular, almost clinging melody,' and Sir Joseph Barnby, who conducted the

London performance said, ' it is good ! ' The Dutch critics say his Rhine and Schelde themes are so broad and natural, and one Dutchman, Karel Bondam, exclaimed : ' He waves his wand over the Rhine, and behold the Spirit of the Rhine actually arises and we see her clearly.'

These water themes are then a kind of magic and appear to different admirers in different forms, conformably to their differing tastes—like the wicked fairy who appeared before each man she wished to destroy in the form of his sweetheart. But what can it mean that the Frenchman should say, how neat, logical and fresh ; the German, how large natured, etc. ; the Englishman, how charming and homely ; the Dutchman, how broad and natural—each man admiring in this music his own predilections. What can this mean than that the music is far greater than each separate critic is aware of, that these river motifs touched humanity at its centre, that they possess universal excellence from which all can pick what they best like ; can leave behind what they are not attuned to appreciate, whilst finding nothing which actually grates or displeases ? Surely this is the supreme mark of good creative work that it appeals to all according to their capacities, displeases none, whilst perhaps none see quite all there is to admire and love in it.

The fields, the sky, the trees displease none, but please each person in the measure of his artistic capacity. But let me narrow the field of vision again ; it is of Benoit's peculiar insight into or akinness with the æsthetic significance of water, the voice of water, with its infinitude of liquid inflections, that I am so anxious to speak truly about. As I feel the whole matter far more surely than I can ever hope to understand it, I fear I must rely more on the goodwill and quick sympathy of the reader, than on the knowledge and intelligence of the writer, in order finally to get the matter clear. Perhaps this verse of Heil's in ' Lucifer ' may help one on the way to a nearer understanding :—

O Schelde, ik heb uw stem gehoord ;  
Ze zingt een lustig lievend woord,  
Een woord van vreugd en minne !  
En levens singt ze een diep akkoord,  
Dat grootheid meldt van oord tot oord  
En dringt in hart en zinnen.

[O Schelde, I have heard thy voice, it sings a loving joyous word, a word of joy and love, the while it swells a deep, deep chord proclaiming greatness from place to place, and surging through one's heart and senses.]

The soft lapping of water ; the low melodious plaint of the waves, water gently droning, water seething, surging, buffeting in storm—

Benoit speaks that language with hardly a trace of foreign accent. This, at least, no man before, I think, has ever done; generally the accent has been outrageously foreign. It would seem, at times, that the spirit which moves upon the waters was his familiar. In the translation of nature sounds there is always both a loss and a gain—a loss in freedom and freshness, a gain in either energy or sweetness.

I do not of course mean that Benoit's music is strictly onomatopœic, but that he knows how to call up by sound those feelings and sensations of beauty which are produced in us by the sight and sounds of vast masses of water, whether in flow or stagnant. And this is really no small matter æsthetically, for the sights and sounds of water have ever been full of the deepest significance to the human race throughout its history. And very often, if not always, the uses and needs of the past become the æsthetics of the present. A thought-image (that of a skilful, daring tight-rope walker) governed the greater part of Nietzsche's intellectual life—that thought-image presided (he tells us so himself) over most of his thoughts, fashioning them to daring and evasiveness. A thought-sound, the sound of the voice of a river seemed to dominate Benoit's musical life, lending a curious liquid monotony and a bemusing breadth of phrase to nearly all he wrote.

As a musician pure and simple it seems probable that Benoit may take only second rank; but as a tone-poet he takes first rank undoubtedly. His descriptive music is more philosophically worked out, is more poetic and is really descriptive, or interpretative. Benoit was a supreme translator of emotion into musical emotion. Temperamentally and racially too, perhaps, he was placed at that exquisite spot where southern softness ends and northern stringency begins.

## II

Benoit was born at Harelbeke, West Flanders, on August 17, 1834, and he died on March 8, 1901. At school he was of quick parts, and gifted with a lively imagination, a greedy and retentive memory. He had thus the scholar's mental equipment, but he had also the poet's temperament. His father wished him to become a schoolmaster, but the boy sent in blank sheets of paper at one of his preliminary examinations. This effectually settled the matter; the boy had his own way and was allowed to study music. Shortly after this his father took him to Fétis in Brussels. Two years later Benoit took the second prize in harmony, and in 1854 (a year later) the first prize, and also the special prize for counterpoint and fugue. The

following year he received honourable mention at the *Prix de Rome* competition for his cantata 'Le Dernier Jour d'Herculanum.' The first prize on this occasion went to Piet de Mol (another Fleming). From this time forth his works appeared in print. K. L. Haussens was his master in orchestration and conducting. In 1857 he won 'Le Prix de Rome' with his cantata 'La Mort d'Abel' (poem by Clemens Wystman, who strangely enough was himself a composer of skill). The State then offered him foreign travel, and Fétis advised Leipzig and subsequently Dresden. In Dresden he spent the summer of 1858 and then visited Berlin, Prague and Munich. During his journeys he composed, for the Belgian Academy, a 'Petite Cantate de Noël' of which Daussoigne-Méhul said that it was in some respects a most remarkable work. So far he has been Pierre Benoit, henceforth he is Peter Benoit. He sends his thesis to the Royal Academy: it is 'De l'Ecole de Musique flamande et de son Avenir.'

The honest and poetic Fleming now takes the fatal step; he turns his back on Paris, on French culture. With mocking eyes the French watch his retreating dwindling figure. Paris could have placed Benoit on the highest pinnacle of Fame, and would have done so had he cajoled her ever so little; he would at the very least have been as well known to us as Grieg, Debussy, Strauss, Mahler, Tschaikovsky, Gustav Holst, or Sibelius. But he could not compromise, however little; it was always feeding time for the 'Lion of Flanders.' In England, after we had become accustomed to a somewhat new style in oratorios, I think Benoit's music would have been very popular—there is a touch of 'community singing' about his enormous choirs and broad effects.

The advertising power of Holland and Belgium is of no worth, and more is the pity, for in music their taste and judgment are perhaps the soundest in the world. Mr. Rhené-Baton, the celebrated French conductor, is amongst those, as he told me two years ago, who think Dutch audiences perhaps the most reverently receptive and intelligently encouraging of all audiences. (The true Fleming is, of course, by origin a Netherlander.)

After his first big work, the *Prix de Rome* cantata, other works followed; roughly thus:—

Messe Solennelle	1862	De Waereldin	1876
To Deum	1863	(Cantata for children.)	1876
(400 voices, orchestra 81.)		Charlotte Corday	1876
Requiem	1863	W. de Zwijsger	1876
(400 voices, orchestra 81.)		Rubens Cantate	
Lucifer	1866	Antwerpen (3) Male Choir	1877
(500 voices, orchestra 100.)		Joncfrouw Kathelijne	1879
Two Flemish Operas	(?) 1867	Muse der Geschiedenis	1880
De Schelde	1869	Hucbald	1880
Drama Christi	1871	De Rhijn	1889
De Oorlog	1873	One Pianoforte Concerto.	
(600 voices, large orchestra.)		One Flute Concerto.	
		And many minor compositions.	

This list represents about 36 years work. Benoit was both a quick and a slow worker. He never forced what we now call the subconscious mind, but waited for its drive. When it did not wish to confide anything to his conscious mind, he rested. When it did, he worked quickly and well. In plain words, when he had something to say he said it, when he had not he waited until he had. He never forced his talent or wrote to order. In this respect he was very like Sibelius, who also will never hurry on a work.

As a conductor of his own works especially, he had, so all who saw him or played under him agreed, a broad, inspiring, generous beat, his whole manner was magnetic and virile. Like G. K. Chesterton's Father Brown, he carried an umbrella about with him always, and on several occasions took rehearsals with it. Conducting 500 performers with an umbrella requires courage!

### III

The work which most set me wondering was 'De Rhijn.' Never again, I think, will music of the River be equal to that. Unless some descendant of a thousand ferrymen should receive the gift of music, and be educated to use that gift. I was fourteen years old when first I heard 'De Rhijn.' A young Dutch pianist, Karel Bondam, seized me by the arm, 'You've not heard Benoit's "De Rhijn" have you?' he shouted. 'Well then, come now and hear it.' I went home with him; all the way there he talked of Peter Benoit. 'Why,' he said, 'the children in the street follow after and make fun of him—he always takes his umbrella with him and has conducted whole rehearsals with it: he is the son of a ferryman.' (This was not correct.) I remember distinctly being bored with the title, 'The Rhine,' it seemed tripperish, like a week on the Norfolk Broads or a 'bus ride to Mortlake—why not the Amazon or the Murrumbidgee? But I knew my friend too well, I waived my contempt for the Jordan. The liquid opening measures of 'De Rhijn' put all my snobbishness to flight. 'This, you must see,' said young Bondam, 'is the Rhine, not a piece of fine music pretending to be the Rhine!' 'Who gave him the secret of how to do it?' 'How is it done? You can't say, he was born with it in his head.' If not the exact words my friend used they are nearly so, and certainly that was the spirit of what he said. And I don't think I can add anything to it even to-day, though I have thought about it for so many years since. He painted a river in sounds of music. Others have done so. But most river music is as irritatingly unreal as would be the picture of a pretty waitress

daintly drinking a cup of tea and supposed to represent Queen Boadicea taking poison after her defeat by the Romans.

The story of the Rhine is a poem of Julien de Geijter; it is allegorical. The spirit of the son of the Schelde speaks to the daughter of the Spire of Antwerp Cathedral whom he loves and to whom he is betrothed. He tells her of his longing to travel far from the Schelde to wilder regions. Much grieved his bride-to-be taunts him with longing for other kisses. He quickly reassures her, she must accompany him. 'Where then,' says she, 'do you wish to travel?' 'The Rhine, I must see the Rhine.' The music then gives their impression of this wedding-flight and of their boundless admiration for the Rhine, until they long again to be back by the banks of the peaceful Schelde.

To the right performance of this noble cantata 500 voices and 100 players are necessary. This unfortunately is expensive. 'Lucifer,' the cantata or oratorio which was performed in London, in Paris and Berlin, cost £2,600 in Paris. The Benoit-Fonds Society exists purely for the purpose of producing some of his works once or twice a year—on the date either of his birth, August 17, or of his death, March 8. The performance always takes place in Antwerp. This society is eleemosynary. 'De Oorlog' (War) needs a larger chorus even and a bigger orchestra.

'Lucifer' was given in London at the Royal Albert Hall on the evening of April 8, 1899. The conductor was Mr. Barnby, the organist Mr. W. Hodge. The great papers, with the exception of *The Times*, all gave suitable praise. *The Times* critic, however, chose to declare that this so-called Flemish music was merely a continuation of French music. This did not agree with the French verdict at all, nor with that of Délibes, nor of Gounod. As for Liszt, his remark, 'Benoit is the Rubens of Music,' was quoted all over Belgium and Holland. The French music which has since been composed certainly is essentially different from Benoit's music, so if that was a continuation of the French school it was a continuation which was not continued, and which ended with Benoit. But I am confident that no critic living at the present day would dream for a single instant of classing Benoit with any variant of the French school. There is, perhaps, some resemblance to César Franck, but César Franck had Flemish blood and his music is tinged with Flemish feeling.

'Lucifer' was performed in England, France and Germany; my preference is for 'The Rhine,' and 'The Scheldt,' but undoubtedly Benoit considered 'De Oorlog' (War) his finest work.

It happens also to have been performed in Antwerp more recently

than any other of his works, indeed, as recently as July, 1927. Its first performance was in Antwerp in 1873. In 1880 two thousand performers took part in this oratorio. This would seem almost a community singing affair, and there can I think be little doubt that the underlying motives of community singing were peculiarly cherished by Peter Benoit; indeed, what could be better calculated to revive in a whole people a sense of their national art which was Benoit's most intimate vision—folk-song on a colossal scale? In every Fleming he saw a potential Benoit—he would not write down to them, they should sing up to him. Consequently, it differed from recent community singing efforts in this, that Benoit, far from compromising with his art, seeking in any way to come down to any alleged level of the people, spurred himself on to give of his very best, his most musically learned, and, at the same time, most deeply heartfelt. Great music, like religion he was sure, must be accessible to the lowliest—if all bodies and all conditions of earthly existence could not be equal, it was at least certain to him that all souls were equal. As Edgar Allan Poe once wrote, 'It is monstrous to say that any one soul can be superior to any other, though one soul may have superior means of manifesting itself in worldly affairs.' How far he was right in thinking thus one need not decide, yet it is very certain that any attempt to come down to an alleged level is always a failure. A great general came to lecture at my first preparatory school and disappointed us all greatly by talking about cricket only. This he did as one who had forgotten; he descended rather below our level. What a pity; for our brains were on stretch to grasp the most intricate mysteries of military strategy he could have put before us, or so we thought.

All Benoit's works were conceived upon a grandiose scale, 'De Oorlog' more so than any of them. Soloists, solo chorus, little chorus, chorus of children, and grand double chorus, great orchestra, supplementary orchestra, and grand organ—a canvas spacious enough for Rubens! Any composer, of course, may, if he choose, call for a great army of performers, but Benoit's music shows clearly that his inward vision justified the employment of so much material.

There is never in his music any freakish or analytic insistence on violence; for, as in nature, everything with him is synthetic, the component parts in proper scale, and if ever sensuousness has been clean, tonic and trustful in God, it was so in his music.

Benoit, even in his own day, was not considered a 'modern,' indeed he was found difficult to classify. Catholic in his tastes he yet expressed a somewhat curious combined preference for the music of Palestrina and Weber. He was quite untouched by the egoist psychology which ranks the individual will so greatly above

the universe. Consequently, the idea that anything a strong character chose to impose upon the world was great art, remained foreign to him, and to all that he ever did or said. He never questioned the beauty of the lilies of the field, nor sought to substitute for it the contortions and grimacings of will power. He never sought, as the Nietzscheans do, to vanquish God with an epigram—he was too simple and hearty for that. Sibelius is now doing for Finland what Benoit did for Flanders, but Sibelius is a pessimist and Benoit was an optimist. There is more joyous breadth of feeling and less noble asperity in Benoit than in Sibelius, but they were both equally untouched by ambitious 'fashions.' Hence they have both, in marked degree, that unfathomable originality which is so often the reward for remaining natural.

In private life Benoit was joyous, generous, upright, sometimes an insolent equal, but never a contemptuous superior. Musical criticism of the private-enquiry-agent type, or of those who are fanatically ethical will, I am confident, reveal little in his life at which to carp. He paid his bills, and brushed his hair when he thought of it. His relations with women were frank, reverent and romantic, and by no means over numerous.

In so far forth as it is possible for a human being to live wholly for a single object, he lived wholly for music and Flanders, and won the love of his compatriots.

H. P. MORGAN-BROWNE.

## MEANING IN POETRY AND MUSIC

The following joint comments upon Miss Katharine Wilson's article, 'Meaning in Music and Poetry,' which appeared in the July number of *MUSIC AND LETTERS*, p. 211, have been sent by Mr. Charles Williams and Mr. Hubert J. Foss, representing severally the poet's and the musician's points of view. Mr. Williams begins:—

It is a little difficult to make out from Miss Wilson's interesting article exactly what she sets out to prove. Her last paragraphs are undeniable, especially her last sentence: 'We take as much of their [poetry and music] meaning as we can and in the manner in which we can.'

Well, of course, we do. But her first sentence said 'a great deal more than that. Oh, a great deal more,' as the White Queen remarked.

'Poetry resembles music rather than speech,' Miss Wilson begins by stating. For this star-shifting dogma she offers four reasons:—

(1) 'Its subjective inspiration, intention, impulse, or whatever we call it, being more akin to that of the musical composer than to the motive of the man of prose.' This is sheer assertion. How can we decide on or compare the innermost impulses of Wordsworth and Bach, of Keats and Beethoven? We cannot. We do not know whether Donne was more like Bach or Wagner. We may guess, but we can't *know*.

(2) 'The impression it makes on the reader is more like the impression made by music.' But is it? This is to be discussed.

(3) 'Its material more purely musical.' No. Poetry uses words; music uses notes. It surely cannot be said that words (which are common to poetry and prose) are more 'purely' musical than words. Their sound-value may be accentuated, but they are not changed in their nature and made more 'purely' anything.

(4) It is 'made for its own sake.' More than prose? More than *all* prose?

Poetry, we agree with Miss Wilson, uses words. But she asserts that 'words are but music adapted to signify facts.' They are not;

they are sounds adapted to signify facts. The response of every hearer (or reader) to every sound varies, infinitesimally but certainly. No two hearers respond to the word 'nun' in the same way even when it occurs, say, in a directory. But all these separate responses have something in common which enables directories to go on printing 'nun' with a certainty of being roughly understood. It is this something in common which is their ordinary meaning; it is to the associations connected with it that they are 'pointers.' 'Poetry is in its essence vague,' Miss Wilson says. Vague? Poetry?

We must endure  
Our going hence, even as our coming hither.  
Ripeness is all.

The clogs of that which else might oversoar  
The loftiest star of unascended heaven,  
Pinnacled dim in the intense inane.

On one side lay the ocean, and on one  
Lay a great water; and the moon was full.

Does Miss Wilson suggest that the less definite we are in our apprehension of the meaning of those words, the more we shall appreciate the poetry? She refers, quoting Tennyson, to 'concentrated efforts of the imagination.' But such concentrated efforts concentrate the normal meanings of words; they do not wish to escape 'definition and definable things.' When Wordsworth talked of a nun (in Miss Wilson's example) he meant a more and not a less nunnish nun than we usually think of. When he said 'adoration' he meant a really breathless adoration, not a vaguer; just as when he said 'the broad sun' he did not mean us to see a less defined but a more defined sun. Doubtless the total effect of the poem is different from that we get when we look at the sun. But that is because a word never is, never can be, and is never wanted to be, the thing itself. Words were meant for poetry; they are at their greatest value when used in poetry. They have more associations, not fewer. And from those concentrated associations they produce in us definite, new, and great experiences.

Poetry is

a state of being, and a means to know  
all man's experiencing faculties  
and that which they experience.

That which they experience may be the same for the poet and for the musician. But the experiencing faculty is that which is combined

with the experience to make the poem or the music, and, as it has held the actual experience, so it is transmuted into the style holding that aesthetic power which the poet or musician delimits to form a permanent being. This style is in the one case words; in the other notes. It is through the union of his own experiencing faculty with his own particular style that the artist works. The style, therefore, is canalised with the experiencing faculty, and it is when the artist is conscious of this union that he determines to make his own piece of work. But the union is in one case with words and the other with notes. Associative words or unassociated notes tend, therefore, to be almost part of the experiencing faculty, certainly closely connected with it, and quite assuredly part of the whole power which the artist shapes and confines. The means, therefore, are part of the end, and have been from all but the first beginning.

*Mr. Foss then adds the following remarks:—*

I dissent immediately from Miss Wilson's opening sentence. Poetry is only nearer to music than speech in so far as both are artistic endeavours, but the closer bondage of poetry and speech is made by the common element of informative and associative materials. Drum and flute differ in quality, quantity, pitch, duration, method, and use; but poetry differs from music in manner as well as content; in intention no less than in accomplishment.

'Poetry can create the same sort of emotional, imaginative experience as music.'

I agree that the sum-total meaning of one poem may be as elusive as that of music, but that is because of the poetical idea in the poem. All arts are alike in the sense that expression is their common ground, but each has its separate idea which is part of its expression.

Thus a beautiful experience (para. 3) can be the meaning of the poem.

P. 212 ('An aesthetic . . .') defines meaning. If this kind of meaning is what Miss Wilson means, I agree that our minds can be filled by a poem with emotions similar to those of music and so one might forget which was the original stimulus. But the forms are as different as the approach. We must recognise from the outset that there are two senses of the word 'meaning' in this paragraph: the composer's intended meaning, including his artistic intention, and the meaning each person finds in his mind on and after hearing. I am inclined, therefore, to cry out at the words 'aesthetic meaning'; that is something previous.

P. 213 ('The purely . . .'). But if meaning is that which fills the mind, may not this be another reader's meaning, or (as Miss

Wilson says in the next line) even a poet's meaning? The meaning of the Shelley passages *is* his giddy aerial triumph and musical turmoil. Shelley is not propounding a syllogism but an aesthetic meaning. The 'thrown-up visual imagery' may be reader's meaning or poet's meaning, but we must know the passage before deciding. Poet's meaning might even contain the other, as passages do that are introduced solely to excite the reader before an event (the meaning of the storm passage in David Copperfield might be said to be our excitement and the effect of the subsequent event).

P. 218 ('The more . . .'). 'Sense of music surely begs the question of the meaning of music, and if so, listener's or composer's meaning. Characteristically literary readers usually find little reader's meaning in music, because of the absence of associations, inability to appreciate absolute sound emotionally, and too logical an emotional demand. Sense of music in poetry and of music in music are quite different things, and the word music has here two meanings.'

P. 214 ('The whole . . .'). This is about reader's meaning which, though a part of art as a whole, has little to do with aesthetics. But a definition of reader's meaning is gradually being asserted here.

P. 215 ('We may . . .'). But clearly these two reader's meanings are *ex hypothesi* not the same. See p. 214, 'an individual accustomed to reacting in an individual way.' The cases are too extreme. The 'marginal meanings' should surely be what each reader sees in the music, the whole what the composer intended. All this paragraph can mean is that outside the composer's intention are the emotional reactions of each man's mind. We are apparently discussing the hearer's reaction to art, not art itself.

para. 2. Still, I ask, what are we comparing words to in musical material? This long paragraph is interesting in that it shows both reader's meaning and poet's meaning combined, the latter first, and the former allowed for in the first.

P. 216 ('Poet's use . . .'). Words, alas, cannot help being pointers, and having associative meaning. A poem is certainly not the sum of the words; its entity is part of its meaning. But its whole method is different from that of music and we have yet to find the point of contact in their respective meanings.

P. 217. But poetry is more concrete not because words are used daily, but because those words have purely associative meanings which first strike us, and music has none. Poetry does not use mountains for pedal notes: it uses words for pedal notes. The mountain may be in the mind of poet or composer and may cause one to use the word 'mountain' and the other a pedal note. The poet, however, calls your attention directly to the object in his mind

by the word mountain; the margin of readers' meanings being thus far restricted. But the pedal note may equally call to vision in *all* readers (or *none*) a ravine, or a giant, or a personal experience, or a mere harmonic episode. Therefore the margin is here limitless. The point is that the poet can suggest a mountain, the composer never (except by association of ideas with objects on a prearranged plan, or the use of a literary title).

Emotionally music may be expressive in a shorter time than words. But the borderland of feeling and fact—logic—is poetry's own province. A poet can express a syllogism as well as his emotions. The composer only a pattern as well as his emotions. He has no material for literal statement.

Onomatopoeisis is in fact the easiest and least important side of musical material and one that has the smallest relation to the art of music.

P. 217 ('Music can . . .'). Melodies may easily derive tonally from speech, or song at least. As for the 'Londonerry Air,' one could no doubt find a parallel poem, but no two people find the same literal, apart from imaginative, 'meaning' in it. A tune is an awkward and restricted example: it is certainly a form of thought, but is it like poetry in its form? A tune is not necessarily complete: it may need development—statement in innumerable different forms before its meaning is clear. Cf. the Beethoven example given at foot of page. This is not a complete utterance—it is more like a proposition in Euclid which needs proving. And further, a musical statement may be atonal or polytonal or even purely harmonic.

P. 218. I agree with the words 'The stream of consciousness,' etc., but this is not equally true of poetry, and, I submit, represents our point of view better than Miss Wilson's.

P. 219. Gehring, too, does not touch poetry, beyond showing that both music and poetry are derived from the mind.

P. 220. The musical intention discussed here is not akin to poetry's intention, for here music is especially stressed for its dramatic (or 'time-occupying') side, which is not poetry's strong side.

So, too, p. 220 ('Music can . . .') shows exactly what poetry has difficulty in doing.

And pp. 221-2 get us far away from poetry. P. 223 gives us a climax. Miss Wilson's reactions are only a very small (if any) part of the aesthetic effort of the poet. Let us imagine a piece of music which for the sake of argument inspired Miss Wilson with exactly the same picture. And let us consider for one moment the two works as pieces of 'art.' What is their similarity? None except the inner

expression of a human feeling which is common to all art. Music could not give you the 'nun' except by a reference to ecclesiastical music; then it might be a monk, which would spoil Wordsworth's picture. In every way, including the performing element in music, the two arts are utterly different.

P. 228, para. 2. 'Absolute poetry.' The succession of beautiful sounds and impressions is the meaning and so the beautiful sounds in music *are* the meaning. This is one of the essential differences, the difference in method, essential because the method is part of the meaning.

(I am inclined to doubt the meaningfulness of tonality, which is carried too far here, I think. Beads have colours, perhaps, but they change with various lights—far more than words do.)

Even in creative nucleus poetry and music are different, for the creative nucleus must take into consideration the method of working out. Mendelssohn said wisely, but he did not say anything that proves a relation with poetry closer than that of any art with any art.

There happens to be one difference that is not only essential but also very illuminating. For music employs the fundamental method of polyphony which is totally alien to poetry. 'Literature has nothing comparable with this,' Sir Henry Hadow rightly says: 'Set four poets to speak at once, you have chaos; four musicians to sing at once, you have creation.' Neither is the voice philosophically integral to the argument, for polyphony is the basis of all orchestral music and much other. This is a theme which could be developed at length, but its implications are sufficiently clear to be inferred as a potent reinforcement of our suggestion that the relation of music and poetry must be established by a far different process of reasoning than Miss Wilson's. I would add that much proper illumination may be gained from Sir Henry Hadow's *Comparison of Poetry and Music* (Cambridge University Press).

*Miss Wilson's Answer to the Foregoing:—*

The Editor has imposed two conditions on my answer, the first easy to comply with, the second hard: good temper and brevity. The second necessitates the categoric style of my replies. I have not room to be polite.

*To Mr. Williams:—*

- (1) I think we can know whether Donne's impulse was nearer Bacon's or Wagner's. Donne and Wagner were impelled to create things, Bacon to talk about things.
- (2) In poetry and music we experience a creation; in prose we read about something.

(3) Words are more purely musical in poetry than in prose because (a) the most unmusical words of prose are not used unless for humorous effect as apart from poetic, and (b) more important, the poet uses and places words to make musical combinations of sound. Moreover, this musical arrangement of words is often as important to the poem as the other aspects of expression being, one might say, part of the meaning.

(4) I admit exceptions. Indeed, considering we may not say that the sum of the angles of *all* triangles equals 180 degrees, I should be very foolhardy to commit myself to any statement without exception. But in so far as prose may be written for the sake solely of itself, it approximates to poetry, and is the less prose.

*In General.* Words as used in scientific prose are pointers to refer to precise facts or opinions, and in general the better our prose the more precise our references. But in poetry words should not point to their meaning so much as suggest associations. Associations, as apart from what Mr. Williams calls 'ordinary meanings,' are themselves vague and undefined. Poetry's business is with this undefined material. In the first example of poetry Mr. Williams gives, we see the poet avoiding the defined in preference for the vague in 'Our going hence' and 'our coming hither,' and especially in 'Ripeness is all.' Here the meaning is, as he says, much more concentrated than we ever find in prose. But the concentration of meaning in poetry is not selective like the brevity in wit, but accumulative, its virtue lying in the number or the amount of associations it can suggest. Hence the more concentrated, or full of association, is the use of words in poetry, the less definite and definable, and the more like the meanings of music in this respect.

I grant that the poet and the musician use different channels through which to express the experience which Mr. Williams admits for the moment may be the same. The one uses associative words and the other notes, but I do not think we ought to say that tunes, harmonies and rhythms do not awaken associations likewise. They do for numbers of people and we cannot dismiss their witness as unmusical, seeing that Bach was amongst them.

Mr. Foss is more difficult to answer shortly because his warfare is a guerilla one, and more difficult to answer anyway because I feel we are at cross purposes. Every now and again he says, 'If Miss W. means this, then I agree,' and Miss W. does. Every now and again I find myself saying to his statements, 'Yes, of course.' Yet we seem to be arguing on different sides. Why precisely do we differ?

expression of a human feeling which is common to all art. Music could not give you the 'nun' except by a reference to ecclesiastical music; then it might be a monk, which would spoil Wordsworth's picture. In every way, including the performing element in music, the two arts are utterly different.

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(1) I think we can know whether Donne's impulse was nearer Bacon's or Wagner's. Donne and Wagner were impelled to *create* things, Bacon to talk about things.

(2) In poetry and music we *experience* a creation; in prose we read about something.

(3) Words are more purely musical in poetry than in prose because (a) the most unmusical words of prose are not used unless for humorous effect as apart from poetic, and (b) more important, the poet uses and places words to make musical combinations of sound. Moreover, this musical arrangement of words is often as important to the poem as the other aspects of expression being, one might say, part of the meaning.

(4) I admit exceptions. Indeed, considering we may not say that the sum of the angles of all triangles equals 180 degrees, I should be very foolhardy to commit myself to any statement without exception. But in so far as prose may be written for the sake solely of itself, it approximates to poetry, and is the less prose.

*In General.* Words as used in scientific prose are pointers to refer to precise facts or opinions, and in general the better our prose the more precise our references. But in poetry words should not point to their meaning so much as suggest associations. Associations, as apart from what Mr. Williams calls 'ordinary meanings,' are themselves vague and undefined. Poetry's business is with this undefined material. In the first example of poetry Mr. Williams gives, we see the poet avoiding the defined in preference for the vague in 'Our going hence' and 'our coming hither,' and especially in 'Ripeness is all.' Here the meaning is, as he says, much more concentrated than we ever find in prose. But the concentration of meaning in poetry is not selective like the brevity in wit, but accumulative, its virtue lying in the number or the amount of associations it can suggest. Hence the more concentrated, or full of association, is the use of words in poetry, the less definite and definable, and the more like the meanings of music in this respect.

I grant that the poet and the musician use different channels through which to express the experience which Mr. Williams admits for the moment may be the same. The one uses associative words and the other notes, but I do not think we ought to say that tunes, harmonies and rhythms do not awaken associations likewise. They do for numbers of people and we cannot dismiss their witness as unmusical, seeing that Bach was amongst them.

Mr. Foss is more difficult to answer shortly because his warfare is a guerilla one, and more difficult to answer anyway because I feel we are at cross purposes. Every now and again he says, 'If Miss W. means this, then I agree,' and Miss W. does. Every now and again I find myself saying to his statements, 'Yes, of course.' Yet we seem to be arguing on different sides. Why precisely do we differ?

Perhaps I misunderstand him, as he does me, in such places as p. 213, para. 4, where 'sense of music' has not two meanings, as in that paragraph I talk only of the sense of music in poetry.

One fundamental difference I discuss in reply to Mr. Williams, another lies in my accepting the composer's meaning and every competent reader or hearer's meaning, even if all different, as legitimate meanings of a given poem or piece of music. I think he regards this as not permissible. He says somewhere that I discuss the hearer's reaction to art, not art itself. But art itself is the reaction, or experience, or meaning which the hearer gets or the composer intends. In other words, though the score or the printed poem are stereotyped, the music and the poem are not really fixed, but vary with each appreciator, a variation that is not more, or less, in one of the arts than the other. The point of contact in their respective meanings lies in the similarity of the texture of the experience in their appreciators, or the texture of the creative nucleus of their 'maker.' I admit that poetry and music are not precisely the same thing, i.e., the poet uses the medium of words and the musician that of notes, with polyphony among his devices, and likewise that at some point in the process of expression—varying with the creator and also possibly the occasion—the creator's 'meaning' must necessarily flow into the channel of either the one medium or the other, or the two simultaneously. This possibility alone—of the creator creating in both arts simultaneously—shows the arts related in more than by merely being arts. They are arts of a very similar nature, of, I put forward, a more similar nature than we commonly suppose, working with different tools sometimes, but a similar psychology.

## REGISTER OF BOOKS ON MUSIC

THE following list contains a selection of recent books on music. Unless otherwise stated, the year of publication is 1928. All prices quoted are net, and in the case of foreign books the price given is that at which the cheapest edition can be purchased in the country in which the book is published. At the present rates of exchange (November 30) ten dollars = £2 1s. 2½d.; ten French francs = 1s. 7½d.; ten Swiss francs = 7s. 11d.; ten German marks = 9s. 10d.; ten Austrian shillings = 5s. 9½d.; ten Italian lire = 2s. 2d.; ten Spanish pesetas = 6s. 8½d.; ten Dutch florins = 16s. 7d.; and ten Swedish kroner = 11s. 0d.

**Aesthetics.** Stieglitz, Olga: *Einführung in die Musikästhetik*. [2nd ed., revised and enlarged.] pp. x. 198. Cotta: Stuttgart. 5 M.

**Appreciation.** Paulkner, Annie S.: *What We Hear in Music*. A course of study in music history and appreciation for use in the home, high schools, etc. [6th ed., revised.] pp. 640. Victor Talking Machine Co.: Camden, N.J. 25/-.

Howes, Frank: *Appreciation of Music*. pp. v. 90. Longmans. 1/- [Workers' Educational Association Outlines.]

**Arab Music.** Ribera, J.: *Historia de la música árabe medieval y su influencia en la Española*. pp. 355. Editorial Voluntad: Madrid, 1927. 5 ptas.

Bach, Riem: *Bach*, illus. pp. 30. Murdoch. 1/6. [Mayfair Biographies.]

**Neue Bachgesellschaft.** *Siebzehntes Deutsches Bachfest*. Kassel, vom 20. bis 23. Sept. 1928. pp. 87. Breitkopf. 2 M.

Preuss, H.: *Bachs Bibliothek*. pp. 25. A. Deichert: Leipzig. 1 M. 20. [Reprinted from the 'Zahn-Festgabe'.] **Beethoven.** Marlave, J. de: *Beethoven's Quartets*. Translated by Hilda Andrews. pp. 488. Milford. 18/-.

Mies, P.: *The Importance of Beethoven's Sketches for the Understanding of his Style*. Translated by D. L. Mackinnon. pp. 212. Milford. 8/6. Mottini, G. E.: *Beethoven*. pp. 106. A. F. Formiggini: Rome.

Weingartner, F.: *Ratschläge für Aufführungen klassischer Symphonien*. Bd. 1. Beethoven. [3rd ed., revised.] pp. xii. 207. Breitkopf. 4 M. 50.

Boettcher, H.: *Beethoven als Liedkomponist*. pp. xli. 180. pl. 18. B. Pilser: Augsburg. 10 M.

**Bells.** Nichols, J. R.: *Bells through the Ages*. The founders' craft and the ringers' art. illus. pp. xi. 320. Chapman & Hall. 21/-.

**Berlin School.** Loewenthal, S.: *Die musikhäbende Gesellschaft zu Berlin und die Mitglieder Joh. Philipp Sack [1722-68], Fr. Wilh. Riedt [1712-64] und Joh. Gabr. Seyfarth [1711-96]*. pp. viii. 97. Polygraphische Gesellschaft: Laufen bei Bern. [A Bâle dissertation.]

**Bodenschatz.** Riemer, O.: *Evhard Bodenschatz und sein Florilegium Portense*. pp. iii. ii. 117. Kistner and Siegel: Leipzig. 2 M. 50. [The Florilegium Portense was an important collection of motets selected and published by Bodenschatz in 2 vols. (vol. 1, 1603, 2nd ed. 1618; vol. 2, 1621).]

**Caruso.** Caruso, Dorothy and Goddard, Mrs. Torrance: *Wings of Song*. An authentic life story of Caruso. illus. pp. 256. Hutchinson. 16/-.

**Choirs.** Grace, Harvey: *A Handbook for Chorists*. Studies in sight-singing and choral technique and expression. Novello. 1/6.

**Church Music.** *L'Ancien Cantatorium de l'Eglise de Strasbourg*. Manuscrit additional 23922 du Musée Britannique, édité par D. André Wilmart, O.S.B., avec un mémoire de M. l'abbé J. Walter. illus. pp. xxii. 115. Editions "Alsatia": Colmar. 50 fr. *Katholisches Kirchenmusik-Jahrbuch*. Herausgegeben von Hans Hoffmann. [2nd issue.] pp. vii. 185. M. Hoffmann: Kronach. 6 M.

**Church Music.** See also *Hymns*.

**Concerts.** Crawshaw, Rev. J. E. and Mrs.: *Suggestions for Musical Evenings*. pp. 82. The Weasley Guild: Leeds. 4½d.

Newmarch, Rosa: *The Concert-Goer's Library of Descriptive Notes*. vol. i. pp. viii. 127. Milford. 8/6.

**Concerts.** See also under *Opera*.

**De Lara.** De Lara, Isidore: *Many Tales of Many Lands*. illus. pp. 288. Hutchinson. 18/-.

**Education.** Bätz, C.: *Das Tonwort*. Bausteine zur musikalischen Volksbildung. Herausgegeben von Frank

Benedik. illus. pp. ix. 188. Breitkopf. 8 M. [A new edition of the author's 'Bausteine zum Schulgesangunterricht im Sinne der Tonwortmethode.]

Jädicke, H.: *Durch Können zur Kunst.* Neue Wege im SchulmusikUnterricht unter Vereinigung der Tonika-Do- und Tonwortprinzipien. Heft 1. pp. 30. A. Strauß: Leipzig. 2 M.

**Festivals.** 30. *Schlesisches Musikfest.* Görlitz vom 30. Mai bis 3. Juni 1928 in der Stadthalle. illus. pp. 30. Hoffmann & Reiber: Görlitz. 1 M.

Form. Gehring J.: *Grundprinzipien der musikalischen Gestaltung.* pp. 66. Breitkopf. 8 M. [Sammlung musikwissenschaftlicher Einzeldarstellungen.]

**General Works.** Aldrich, Richard: *Musical Discourse.* From the 'New York Times.' pp. 305. Milford. 12/6. [Essays on a variety of musical subjects.]

Elson, Arthur: *The Book of Musical Knowledge.* The history, technique and appreciation of music, together with lives of the great composers. New and enlarged ed. pp. xii. 609. Houghton Mifflin Co.: Boston. 1927. 5s.

Grace, Harvey: *A Musician at Large.* pp. vii. 247. Milford. 6/- [Essays contributed to the 'Musical Times' under the pseudonym of 'Feste.]

Terry, Sir Richard: *A Forgotten Psalter, and other essays.* pp. 216. Milford. 12/6.

**German Music.** Malsch, R.: *Geschichte der deutschen Musik,* ihrer Formen, ihres Stils und ihrer Stellung im deutschen Geistes- und Kulturleben. [2nd ed., revised.] illus. pp. xii. 381. C. F. Vieweg: Berlin. 6 M. 75. [First published in 1926.]

Moser, H. J.: *Geschichte der deutschen Musik.* Bd. 8. Geschichte der deutschen Musik vom Auftreten Beethovens bis zur Gegenwart. [2nd ed., revised.] pp. xii. 525. Cotta: Stuttgart. 16 M. [First published in 1924.]

**Gramophone.** Buick, T. L.: *The Romance of the Gramophone.* illus. pp. xvii. 107. Ernest Dawson: Wellington, N.Z.; obtainable from Harold Reeves. 1927. 8/6.

Hajek, Leo: *Das Phonogrammarchiv der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien von seiner Gründung bis zur Neueröffnung im Jahre 1927.* pp. 22. Hölder - Pichler - Tempak: Vienna. [Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien. Sitzungsberichte. Phil.-hist. Klasse. Bd. 207. Abh. 3.]

**Guitar.** See under Lute.

**Handel.** *Händel-Jahrbuch.* Herausgegeben von Rudolf Steglich. [1st year.] pp. v. 166. Breitkopf. 7 M. 50.

**Harmony.** Achtelek, J.: *Der Naturklang als Wurzel aller Harmonien.* Eine ästhetische Musiktheorie. pt. 2. pp. xi. 214. 7 M. [Pt. 1 was published in 1922.]

Boni, G. B.: *Scuola pratica d'armonia senza maestro.* [4th ed., revised. The first instalment.] pp. xvi. Ediz. Sammel: Fermo. 1 L. 50.

Reuter, F.: *Harmonieaufgaben nach dem System Sigfried Karg-Elert.* pp. 85. C. F. Kahnt: Leipzig. 2 M. 80.

Richter, E. P.: *Tratado de armonía teórica y práctica.* Vertido al Español por Felipe Pedrell. 8. y 9. ed., contiene, además, los ejercicios complementarios para el estudio de la armonía práctica, escritos por el mismo autor. pp. vii. 246. Breitkopf. 6 M.

**History.** Chevaillier, L.: *La Musique.* pp. 112. E. de Boccard: Paris. 12 fr. [La Civilisation européenne moderne. tom. 13. pt. 2.]

Isaacson, C. D.: *Simple Story of Music.* pp. xiv. 336. Macy-Masius: New York. 8s.

Scholes, P. A.: *A Miniature History of Music.* pp. 64. Milford. 1/- [Reprinted from the 'Radio Times.]

Untersteiner, A.: *A Short History of Music.* Translated by S. C. Very. pp. viii. 349. John Lane. 7/6. [The Italian original is one of the 'Mannuali Hoepli,' and was first published in 1898, since when three editions have appeared, the latest in 1915. It is unfortunate that this translation has been made from the second edition (1902).]

**Hymns.** Lightwood, J. T.: *Stories of Methodist Music.* Nineteenth century. pp. 54. Epworth Press. 1/-.

**Indian Music.** Clements, E.: *Lectures on Indian Music,* delivered in the University of Bombay in January, 1926. pp. v. 42. University of Bombay. 1927.

**Instruments.** Schröder, H.: *Verzeichnis der Sammlung alter Musikinstrumente im Städtischen Museum Braunschweig.* [With an anonymous contribution: Instrumentenmacher und Instrumentisten in Braunschweig.] pp. 124. E. Appelhans & Co.: Braunschweig. 8 M. [Werkstücke aus Museum, Archiv und Bibliothek der Stadt Braunschweig. no. 8.]

**Kennedy-Fraser.** Kennedy-Fraser, Marjorie: *My Life of Song.* pp. 200. Milford. 7/6.

**Kuhnau.** Kuhnau, Johann: *Priester-Streit aus 'Battalus, der Vorwitzige Musicant.'* [A reprint

- from the Freiberg edition of 1691, with a note by Arnold Schering.] illus. pp. 70. Kistner & Siegel. 2 M.
- Mandoline.** Wild, E.: *Klingender Feierabend*. Ein Weg zum Lauten- und Gitarrenspiel durch Selbstunterricht. 2. Auflage. illus. pp. iv. 89. Teubner: Leipzig. 2 M.
- Medieval Music.** Hughes, Dom Anselm: *Worcester Medieval Harmony of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*. Transcribed, with general introduction, fifteen facsimiles, and notes, by Dom A. Hughes. With a preface by Sir Ivor Atkins. pp. 149. Plainsong and Medieval Music Society. Nashdom Abbey. 25/-.
- Miscellaneous.** Goguel, O.: *Volk und Musik*. Eine Studie. pp. 32. T. Weicher: Leipzig. 80 pf.
- Hamilton, W. F.: *Health Hints for Music Students*. pp. 81. Oliver Ditson Co.: Boston, 1927. 60 c.
- Naylor, E. W.: *The Poets and Music*. illus. pp. 100. Dent. 6/-.
- Reuter, Florizel von: *Psychical Experiences of a Musician in search of truth*. illus. pp. 320. Simpkin Marshall; The Psychic Press. 7/6.
- Moussorgsky.** Belaiev, Victor: *Musorgsky's Boris Godunov and its new version*. Translated from the Russian by S. W. Pring. pp. viii. 59. Milford. 4/-.
- Music Printing.** Der Werdegang der Musiknoten. Eine kurze Einführung in das Wesen der Notentrichs und des Notensatzes. [With 8 plates.] pp. 4. R. Becker: Leipzig. 4 M. 50.
- Opera.** Kruse, G. R.: *Reclams Opernführer*. pp. 428. Reclam: Leipzig. 2 M. [Reclams Universal-Bibliothek no. 6892-6896.]
- McSpadden, J. W.: *Opera Synopses*. A guide to the plots and characters of the standard operas. Revised and enlarged. pp. 307. Harrap. 5/-.
- Melitz, Leo: *Führer durch die Oper*. 232nd-248th thousand. [Edited by O. L. Melitz.] pp. 448. Globus Verlag: Berlin. 3 M. 50.
- Norlind, T.: *Konzert- und Opernlexikon*. Heft. 1. pp. 95. Klio-Verlag: Stockholm. Each part: 2 Kr. 75. [To be completed in 12 instalments.]
- Orchestra.** Who's Who in the Orchestra (anonymous); *Orchestral Writing and Performance* (by Sir Paul Dukes). pp. vi. 97. Caxton Institute: New York, 1927. 2 \$.
- Organ.** Bericht über die dritte Tagung für deutsche Orgelkunst in Freiberg i. Sa. vom 2.-7. Okt. 1927. Herausgegeben durch Christhard Mahnenhois. illus. pp. ii. 212. 8. Bärenreiter-Verlag: Kassel. 9 M.
- Cortum, T.: *Die Orgelwerke der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche im Hamburgischen Staate*. Ein Bestands- und Prüfungsbericht aus dem Jahr 1925. illus. pp. iv. 207. Bärenreiter-Verlag: Kassel. 20 M.
- Piacenza.** Giovanni, E. de: *Studi sull' 800 musicale piacentino*. pp. 18. Unione tip. piacentina: Piacenza, 1927. 5 L. [Piccola biblioteca storica piacentina, no. 8. 100 copies only printed.]
- Piano.** Schuch, K.: *Die einfachen und zusammengesetzten Rollungen im Klavierspiel*. Richtlinien. pp. 44. Leuschner & Lubensky: Graz. 3 M.
- Ziegler, M. Beata: *Das innere Hören als Grundlage einer natürlichen Klavierspiel-Technik*. pp. 39. 12. M. Hieber: Munich. 3 M.
- Piccinni.** La Rotella, P.: Niccolò Piccinni commemorato nel II. centenario della nascita. pp. 45. Cressati: Bari.
- Psychology.** Hausswald, G.: *Wie höre ich Musik?* pp. 60. J. Baum: Pfullingen i. W. 90 pf.
- Reger.** Max Reger: *Briefe eines deutschen Meisters*. Ein Lebensbild. Herausgegeben von Else von Hase-Koehler. illus. pp. 338. Koehler and Ameling: Leipzig. 10 M.
- Rhythm.** Becking, G.: *Der musikalische Rhythmus als Erkenntnisquelle*. pp. 216. B. Filser: Augsburg. 12 M.
- Fellerer, K. G.: *Die Deklamationsrhythmis in der vokalen Polyphonia des 16. Jahrhunderts*. pp. 48. L. Schwan: Düsseldorf.
- Schoeck.** Isler, E.: *Penthesis—Othmar Schoeck*. Führer durch die Musik des Werken. pp. 20. Verlag Musikhause Hüni: Zurich. 1 Swiss fr. [Schoeck, b. 1886, is one of the most prominent of the younger Swiss composers.]
- School Music.** Caroe, Adam: *On Conducting School Orchestras*. Reprinted from the Monthly Musical Record. pp. 16. Augener. 1/-.
- Schünemann, G.: *Geschichte der deutschen Schulmusik*. illus. pp. vii. 897. Kistner & Siegel: Leipzig. 16 M.
- Schubert.** Benz, R.: *Franz Schubert, der Vollender der deutschen Musik*. pp. 48. E. Diederichs: Jena. 1 M. 90.
- Capell, Richard: *Schubert's Songs*. pp. 294. Ernest Benn. 15s.
- Damian, F. V.: *Franz Schubert's Liederkreis 'Die schöne Müllerin'*. illus. pp. vii. 212. Breitkopf. 5 M.
- Engel, E.: *Franz Schubert. Ein Leben in Lied und Leid*. pp. 44. Ginstel-Verlag: Berlin. 75 pf.
- Eulenberg, H.: *Schubert und die Frauen*. illus. pp. 311. Avalun-Verlag: Hellerau. 9 M. 50.
- Franz Schubert: *Tagebuch*. Facsimile der Original-Handschrift im

Archiv der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Wien, ergänzt durch ein Blatt aus der Wiener Stadtbibliothek. Mit einem Vorwort von Otto Erich Deutsch. pp. 7. 24. V. A. Heck: Vienna. 8 M.

Günther, F.: *Mein Freund Schubert*. illus. pp. 172. Rufu-Verlagsgesellschaft: Hamburg. 4 M. 80.

*Katalog der Schubert-Zentenar-Ausstellung der Stadt Wien, 1928 im Messepalast.* [Edited by H. Renther.] pp. viii. 158. Wiener Messe, A. G.: Vienna. 3 Schillings.

Kobald, K.: *Franz Schubert and his times*. Translated by Beatrice Marshall. pp. 320. Knopf. 21/-.

Le Massena, C. E.: *The Songs of Schubert*. A guide for singers, teachers, students and accompanists. With interpretative suggestions by Hans Merx. pp. vii. 184. G. Schirmer: New York.

Whitaker-Wilson, C.: *Franz Schubert: man and composer*. illus. pp. x. 264. William Reeves. 10/-.

Wickenhauser, R.: *Franz Schubert's Symphonien*. Analytische Einführung. pp. 126. Reclam: Leipzig. [Reclams Universal-Bibliothek. nos. 6915-6916.]

Schumann, Wagner, Kurt: *Robert Schumann als Schüler und Abiturient*. Rede. Zugleich Beilage zum Jahresbericht des Gymnasiums zu Zwickau auf das Schuljahr 1927-28. pp. 28. Robert Schumann - Gesellschaft: Zwickau. 1 M.

Song, Brown, Hubert: *The Principles of Expression in Song*. pp. 72. Milford. 2/6.

*La Chanson royale en France*. Recueil historique et populaire. Préface de Jean de la Laurencie. pp. 160. Editions du Pigeonnier. 25 fr.

Smith, Reed: *South Carolina Ballads*. With a study of the traditional ballad to-day. Collected and edited by R. Smith. pp. x. 174. Harvard University Press; Humphrey Milford.

Spanish Music. Prado, G.: *Manual de Liturgia Hispano-Visigótica o Mozárabe*. Madrid: Editorial Voluntad. 4 pts.

Ribera, J.: *Dissertaciones y Opúsculos*. 2 vols. Madrid: Imprenta de Estanislao Maestre. 30 ptas.

[Vol. 2 reprints Prof. Ribera's valuable papers on Spanish-Arabic influences in the music of the Troubadours.]

Ribera, J. *La Música de la Jota Aragonesa*. Madrid: Instituto de Valencia de Don Juan.

Salazar, A.: *Música y Músicos de*

key. Madrid: Editorial Mundo Latino. 6 ptas.

Spanish Music. See also under Arab Music.

Stravinsky. Belaiev, Victor: *Igor Stravinsky's Les Noces*. An outline. Translated from the Russian by S. W. Pring. pp. iii. 37. Milford. 4/-.

Sullivan. Bradstock, Lillian: *Gilbert and Sullivan*. A romantic prose version of the famous operas. pp. vii. 288. Cecil Palmer. 7/6.

Violin. Bondi, S.: *Das natürliche Studium der Kreuzer-Etüden*. pp. 28. Schubethaus-Verlag: Vienna. 1 M.

Batagella, A.: *Règles pour la construction des violons, altis, violoncelles et basses de violes*. IIe édition. Traduction française de G. Koeckert. illus. pp. 34. Aimé Kling: Geneve, 1927. [A translation of a memoir presented to the Academy of Padua in 1882 and published in the following year.]

Voice. Averkamp, A.: *uit mijn praktijk*. Wenken en raadgevingen bij het onderwijs en de studie van den solozang. [2nd ed., revised.] pp. 146. J. P. Kruseman: The Hague. 1 fl. 40.

Evets, E. T. and Worthington, R.: *The Mechanics of Singing*. illus. pp. 160. Dent. 6/-.

Wagner. Diebold, B.: *Der Fall Wagner*. Eine Revision. pp. 46. Frankfurter Societäts-Druckerei: Frankfurt. 1 M.

Poà Aristide: *Siegfrido*. Commento all' opera di Riccardo Wagner. pp. 30. A. Zerbini: Parma, 1927.

Hutschenrayter, W.: *Wagner*. illus. pp. 171. J. P. Kruseman: The Hague. 3 fl. 75. [Beroemde musici. Dl. 10.]

Scheffler, S.: *Richard Wagner*. Sein Leben, seine Persönlichkeit und seine Werke. Kommentare und Einführungen zu seinen Opern und Musikdramen. 2 vol. pp. 520 and 559. Alster-Verlag: Hamburg. 12 M.

Richard Wagner: *Lettres à Hans de Bulow*. Traduites par Georges Khnopff. Préface de Prof. Jean Chantavoine. pp. 240. G. Crès & Cie.: Paris. 12 fr.

Wild, F.: Bayreuth. *Das Handbuch für Festspielbesucher*. Manual for visitors to the Wagner performances. Manuel pour les visiteurs des festivals wagnériens. [34th year.] illus. C. Wild: Leipzig. 5 M. [The text is in German, English and French.]

Wolf, Grunsky, Karl: *Hugo Wolf*. illus. pp. 90. Kistner & Siegel: Leipzig. 2 M. 50. [Die Musik. Bd. 52.]

C. B. O.

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

### *Books on Schubert.*

Richard Capell in 'Schubert's Songs' (Ernest Benn, 15s. net) is the first writer in this country to have taken the whole of the songs to be his province. He has managed to say something about five hundred of them, and several are discussed at a page's length. Any song, therefore, that a singer is at all likely to sing will be found here, and, almost certainly, something that is worth knowing or considering about it; and they are indexed. The plan is to take the songs first as grouped round their poets, and then by the several years of their composition. There would have been other possible groupings—their subjects, their vocal character, their formal analogies; but let him do it his own way. What does a scheme matter as compared with the carrying of it out? To appreciate his distinctions between the poets we need to know more German poetry than Englishmen have as a rule read. Schubert himself did not differentiate his poets, as the book shows, and it is clear that he reacted to them quite unconsciously. Still we would not have missed these pages, which tell us much that we have no other means of knowing.

The division by years is more vital. The full nature of Schubert's growth is not to be realised by looking at his songs alone, though they imply it, as Enna's fountain argued the underground Arethusa. Everyone agrees in praising his melodies, and everyone knows that melody is the surface of harmony, and that, incidentally, harmony is taught because melody can't be. Schubert's early melodies have much invention but little depth; he taught himself gradually to give them breadth and poise. He "has everything to find out for himself," as Mr. Capell says, speaking of his sufferings, and it applies equally to his tunes. The author of this valuable book knows his subject, understands his hero, and can see music and poetry, both, wherever they exist.

Mr. Newman Flower in his 'Franz Schubert' (Cassel, 15s. net) writes biography without reference to music. His book is of value for the well reproduced illustrations and the full account of the composer's friends. His translation is not to be trusted; what Spaun said of the boy standing behind his chair was that he played not 'cleverly' but 'in much better time than himself'; he gave Baron Schönstein a tenor, not a baritone; and he reported Ruzicka as declaring the famous discord in the 'Erlking' to be not 'happily conceived' but 'happily resolved.' The famous letter about 'a roll and a few apples' gives the reference Matt. 3, 4; this appears as 2, 4, but neither is right. Schubert is misquoting from I Peter 2, 6. 'Und wer an jn gleubet, der sol nicht zuschanden werden,' and Mr. Flower's mis-translation of the misquotation, 'If I have to depend on you, I hope I may do so without feeling ashamed,' lightly transfers to brother Ferdinand what was in fact an appeal to the Deity. There is a full and exact bibliography by the Assistant Keeper, Department of Printed Books, British Museum, with three or four hundred entries.

Karl Kobald's 'Franz Schubert,' which appeared last year, described itself as 'a Viennese Schubert book'; though ostensibly a biography,

it devotes a fifth of its pages to the works, but anyone who reads what is said of the B flat trio and the E flat mass will wish that he had let them alone. This book is translated by Beatrice Marshall (A. A. Knopf, 21s. net.), but so imperfectly that the original is necessary to the understanding of the English; we cannot even guess what 'The Schöne Müllerin consists of twenty songs in four parts' means. There is no index.

The translation by Venetia Savile of Schubert's Letters is faithful and in English (Faber & Gwyer, 6s. net). The book contains, out of O. E. Deutsch's large collection, only those which come actually from the composer's pen; of these it gives a thoroughly trustworthy account. Ernest Newman's preface connects the man and his work happily and sufficiently.

A. H. F. S.

*The principles of expression in song.* By Hubert Brown. Oxford University Press. 2s. 6d. net.

This booklet seeks to determine what are the main outlines by which a rightly expressed song may be recognised, and how to shape one's course to fill out those lines. The author writes succinctly, without any unnecessary disquisitions, and manages to provide a number of hints as to phrasing, pronunciation, breathing and so on, which have a certain use for practitioners of singing. In reality there is no infallibility to be found in any book, however well put together, which endeavours to lay down rules for expression in song. Rules for the acquirement of a technique are all very well. But very little more than that can be got from books. Only unceasing cultivation of a sensitivity to weight of breath, colour of sound, curve of vocal line, balance of phrase by phrase (to mention only a minute percentage of factors which go to make an artistic interpretation) can make it possible for a well-equipped vocalist to embark on the long, alluring business of becoming a fine singer. And so when the author of this handbook arrives at chapters five and six, starting to discuss what method is best employed in singing certain definite songs, we can only pass on to chapter seven, which holds some useful hints as to accompanying.

*Musical discourses.* By Richard Aldrich. Oxford University Press. 12s. 6d. net.

This series of reprinted articles, chiefly from the *New York Times*, opens with a lengthy discussion of programme music which puts the case against very fairly, the humour a little forced, the whole thing rather like flogging a dead horse. A paper on folk songs in America has a better air about it, describing very pleasantly Cecil Sharp's Appalachian activities. It is when Mr. Aldrich talks about music in America that he becomes most informative and really interesting. The history of the fortunes of the Beggar's Opera in America is a serviceable footnote to musical history. So, too, the well-told tale of Jenny Lind and Barnum, a case of diamond cut diamond with a vengeance. Adelina Patti's fortunes (how immense her fortune, too) in America are the subject of another article. The book ends with three shorter essays on Kneisel, the conductor and quartet leader, Krehbiel, the 'dean' of American music critics, and Theodore Thomas, the conductor.

Sc. G.

## REVIEWS OF PERIODICALS

*De Muziek.* Amsterdam. August-September.

An end is made to Heer Paul Sanders's contribution on Jewish influences in music. The writer here deals with the music of the synagogue. Heer Pijper writes a necrology of Janacek.

October.

In his informative article on drama and music Heer Balthazar Verhagen traces the development of this union of the two arts from Greek times through Giovanni Bardi up to Stravinsky. The article contains a reasoned consideration of the position of the Dutch composer Alphons Diepenbroek. Prof. Floris van der Mueren writes on organ literature of late-gothic, renaissance and barock times. The article has also to do with the registration of organs and contains notes on two instruments in Holland dated 1511 and 1540 respectively. Heer Sanders discusses the music which accompanies films, with special attention to music written definitely for a scenario. There is a pleasant notice of the jubilee of the great Dutch singer, heard over here in past years, Mevrouw Noordewier-Beddingius.

November.

The recitatives in Bizet's 'Carmen' are not by the composer (there is here good material for another 'Boris' heresy-hunt), but by his friend Ernest Guiraud, and added after Bizet's death for the Vienna performance in 1875. Heer Paul Sanders, writing in this number, puts in a plea for restoration of the original score of the opera, with the Meilhac-Halévy spoken dialogue. This article is full of interest. The origin of certain of the opera's themes is traced, the relationship between the opera-libretto and Prosper Mérimée's book is demonstrated. Further, there are illustrations of staging for a performance in Holland. Heer Willem Gehrels writes on school musical activities.

*Gaceta Musical.* Paris. (Franco-Hispano-American Society.) September.

Sr. Joaquin Turina, the composer, writes a short notice on the Spanish conductor Bartolomé Pérez Casas. There is an instructive article on the religious music of the ancient Greeks by Sr. Georges Meautis. Sr. Florent Odero's note on the Viennese waltz in the romantic epoch is a rather disjointed piece of reading, though it contains useful information. There is also a couple of pages (more would have been welcome) on Nicaraguan folk-music by Sr. Delgadillo.

*La Rassegna Musicale.* Turin. July.

Sig. A. Cimbro writes on aspects of romantic music, drawing attention to the effect it has had up to the present day, either direct or indirect. Dr. Hans Mersmann, in an informative article on contem-

porary Teutonic music, makes mention of the new operatic works of Hindemith, Kurt Weill, Wellesz and Alban Berg. There is a good article by Sig. Luigi Perrachio on Bach-Busoni, the latter's treatment of the former in his setting of organ works for the pianoforte. Busoni comes out well from the discussion. Sig. Luigi Parigi's serial on music and pictures reaches a further stage, the representation of private performances, including Giorgione's 'Concerto campestre' and the astounding Ostade in the Cook collection at Richmond, both of these being reproduced.

#### August-September.

Sig. Francesco Flora writes learnedly and at length on the metre of speech and the rhythm of music, their inter-relations and differences. Sig. Guido Pannain contributes a critical article on Honegger. The 'Musica figurata' by Sig. Parigi is continued with a description of pictures dealing with allegories and with portraits.

#### October.

The article by Sig. Flora on metre and rhythm is continued. Poetry and song are nearly allied and their interactions, giving rise to one of the highest branches of art, are worth constant and close study. Sig. Attilio Cimbro's extremely interesting piece of work on style in modern music deals chiefly with Stravinsky (excerpts from 'Pétrouchka' and 'Le sacre du printemps' are given) and through him with the work of contemporaries. Both Riemann and Grove are silent on the subject of Thovez, about whom Sig. A. Pompeati contributes an article entitled 'The ideas on music of Henry Thovez.' It would seem that this musicologist has written largely, and his ideas, as related here, read well, as though they were composed of criticism that was backed by real thought.

#### November.

This number opens well with an excellent article by M. André Tessier on Giacomo Torelli and his life in Paris, whither he came in 1645. The first performance of Caprioli's 'Nozze di Peleo e di Teti' was given in Paris in 1654 with Torelli's staging. Delightful illustrations of this are included in the text. Sig. G. Pannain contributes a critical study of Schönberg. Sig. Domenico Petrini writes on the history of art and of taste, an article that is fully documented. 'La musica figurata' (Sig. Parigi) deals with pictures of Saint Cecilia.

#### Musica d'oggi. Milan. August-September.

Two articles call for notice in this issue. The first is by Sig. de Renis, dealing with Boito and his appreciative valuation of Bellini. The other short notice discusses what fame Palestrina enjoyed during his lifetime, a very fair amount according to the present writer, Sig. Alberto Cametti.

#### October.

This monthly, which has a more definitely regional outlook than other Italian contemporaries, opens the present number with an article which deals with the 150th anniversary of 'La Scala.' The great names of composers and singers who have to do with this famous

headquarters, they alone would make up a lengthy article. M. Stan Golestan writes a short footnote about Rumanian folk-songs.

*Musikblätter des Anbruch.* Vienna. August-September.

Herr Max Brod's memorial article on Leos Janacek is one of the best and most informative among the many that have appeared in European musical journals. There is also an interesting descriptive notice by Kurt Weill of the new 'Dreigroschenoper' (which is compared, by the writer of the first section of the article, Herr Herbert Ihering, to the Beggar's Opera). Herr Oscar Bie describes the music of this opera.

October.

Mr. Igor Gleboff, of Leningrad, writes on the new 'musikgewordene Theater' in that city. The article goes at some length into questions of aesthetics, but does not say enough actually about this theatre, whether it is a new venture, or a development of an older system, or if the term is used here in a general sense. More information would be welcome. Herr Edwin von der Null contributes an instructive article (which would have been the better for some musical illustrations) on Bartók and his technique of composition. Dr. Erwin Felber weighs the pros and cons of the question 'Is there a Jewish music?' and leaves the matter in the balance. He has, however, some useful remarks to make on Jewish composers and how they should (and do not) go to work to build up a really Jewish music.

*Pult und Taktstock.* Vienna. September.

Herr Erwin Stein writes on Janacek. The present state of the concerto is discussed by Herr Ernst Latzko in a useful short article. Another article of practical importance is that by Herr Alfred Szendrei dealing with orchestral tone-colour on the wireless, the three main divisions of the orchestra being subjected to analysis. Herr Viktor writes on the position of the saxophone in the orchestra.

*La Revue Musicale.* Paris. October.

This number opens with a highly-diverting interview of Schönberg by his friend Erwin Stein (of the Viennese monthly *Pult und Taktstock*). Schönberg has questions put to him such as 'Why is it that you have kept so long from writing orchestral music?' 'Why is it that during these last years you have so often made use of the so-called old forms?' (Schönberg's new orchestral variations are under discussion.) The composer's answers are as amusing as they are instructive. There is a pleasant, informative illustrated article by M. Labande on ballets of the Monagasque Court of Honoré II (1654-1655). M. della Corte has an article on certain aspects of the *opera comica* of Piccini. Music in Montaigne's time is the subject of an article by M. A. Machabey, and M. Henry Prunières contributes a note on a musical autograph of Lully's work, discovered by M. Charavay, and of especial interest as being the first actual manuscript to be unearthed.

November.

M. Romain Rolland gives distinction to this number by his article on Beethoven's two Brunsvik sisters. It is a long, fully-documented piece of writing, with the usual Rolland footnotes which contain such abundant added information. There is an article by M. Gustav Hetsch

on Hans Andersen and his dealings with music and musicians. Lorenz's book *Abendländische Musikgeschichte im Rhythmus der Generationen* is the basis of an article on musical history by M. van den Borren. M. Machabey continues his article on music in Montaigne's time.

*Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft*. Leipzig. October.

Herr Heinrich Besseler's contribution is entitled 'From Dufay to Josquin.' The period is still sufficiently obscure to make this article worthy of attention. There are some helpful illustrations, but double the number should have been included. Herr Siegfried Nadel has a long article on the psychology of musical talent, i.e., either the feeling for music, or the ability to practise the art. He finds, after much discussion, that any normal person can be musical in the former way, and that only definite education can lead a person along the latter path.

## REVIEWS OF MUSIC

*Pianoforte.*

There is a pianoforte sonata by R. M. H. Richardson (Aug.) which is well enough written, though it must be owned that the composer shows little originality. The last movement might be Chaminade, the second Elgar, neither in their better moments. The first is palpably well meant. Its weakness lies in the way the two themes (used alternately) are treated, or rather never really treated at all. In a later work it is to be hoped that the composer will be able to think of more to do with his material. Frank Bridge is never at a loss for some twist or turn for his themes. 'Winter Pastoral' and 'A dedication' (Aug.) are both worked out with skill. The former is plainer going than the other, which has a mass of strange harmonic and rhythmic device. Adam Carse starts his variations on a theme (Aug.) at a disadvantage, for the theme itself is undistinguished and meanders without character or personality. The variations which follow are better. 'Abelard and Heloise' (Aug.) makes a set of pleasant, unassuming, quite clever short sketches by J. W. Ivimey. The opening movement is one of the best. Julius Harrison, in 'Severn country' (W.R.), provides three short pieces for those who like sweet things. The second is especially so, just saved by a touch of Ravel in the last two bars. Three pieces by Maurice Besly (W.R.) use the very slenderest thought and wax delicately maudlin. The actual writing is efficient. Katherine Parker's four musical sketches (W.R.) are an altogether better kettle of fish. They go no great distance, but they do at least reach out farther than the pianoforte keyboard. This composer relies largely on harmonic colourings to carry her through. In that case she would be well advised to study new models, make use of a harmonic scheme less jejune than that which now holds her in thrall. There is a vast amount of fresh tints to be obtained nowadays. Sczymanowski, Schönberg, even the much-maligned Ravel, all these have treasures in store for a collector of new chords. 'Hampstead pieces' (Aug.) rather tie George Aitken down to one spot. But even there new influences may penetrate, and here again a little abandonment to fresh admixtures of colours would lighten the page very advantageously. This writer does his work very well, and if once he could find something personal to say would be worth listening to. The same, only stronger, for the 'Esquisses' of Leopold Ashton (Aug.). Ludomir Rozycki has a tang about him, probably because his idiom is foreign to us, and therefore new. It may well be that in his own country he fills a similar place to those composers last mentioned. His 'Poultry yard' (Aug.) is certainly amusing stuff, difficult enough to mean fair study for the average pianist. 'The impatient horseman'

by the same composer (animals appear to attract him) if played by a good executant would sound well. Two pieces from Lord Berners's 'Triumph of Neptune' (Ch.) are not piano music purely, but transcriptions from an orchestral score. They have been already discussed in these columns and only need noting here as being so much better than anything else so far.

The Oxford Piano Series are graded and contain, in this sending, some good things (O.U.P.). 'Sandford pool,' by Corbett Sumson, with 'Hey-day,' 'Mirage,' and 'Willow's shade' from the same pen, all are excellent short pieces, above the average in every way. Their chief claim to honourable mention is their unpretentiousness. Unlike so many of the smaller pianoforte compositions of this day, these pieces do not presume to fill a larger space than is reasonable. For that alone one is thankful, and glad to recommend them to school teachers. (The whole of this series seems meant for use in that quarter.) F. H. Shera's 'Bridge end' is another example of pleasant work, in an easier grade, though still for the best pupil. 'The blue jacket' is a hornpipe by Gordon Slater, one of three pieces, in a volume, all of which go well. Coming to yet easier ground, Barham Johnson's 'Hard-handed man' and Norman Peterkin's 'Summer eves' are the best sort of thing to keep a learner interested while instruction is being undergone. Four books of 'Holiday sketches' by Henry Coleman are provided with a second pianoforte part which adds to the amusement of the lesson. John Longmore's three sets (p. 134-5-6) are equally good, a shade difficult, perhaps, for the grade in which they are placed. Lastly, in the lowest grades, for youngest players, there is a good choice from among pieces by Alec Rowley (p. 139), Eva Pain (p. 143), T. A. White (p. 142), with duets by Felix Swinstead (p. 137). There are also duets of a higher grade by Colin Taylor ('The realm of youth') and Norman Demuth ('Bolero'), this last being only compassable by top-notchers.

Six pieces by Edwin Benbow (Cra.) are difficult to classify. They all, with the possible exception of 'Sea swell,' deal with childish aspects. Yet they are too hard for a child's fingers to manage. Can they be meant to be played to children? And in that case, would any child be interested, or even amused, by them? Schumann wrote charming music for children to listen to, but those had originality and wit. They could at once become the delight of grown-ups as well. Schumann had more sense than to write down to children.

#### *Small orchestra.*

Eight symphonies by William Boyce, transcribed and edited by Constant Lambert (O.U.P.), come as a surprise. Boyce has hitherto been known mainly for his choral writing, which, though only to be heard in a few (not by any means all) of the more musical cathedrals and churches, is available for the wider vulgarisation it deserves but has not yet obtained. But as an instrumental composer Boyce is practically unknown. A very real service has been done to English music by the issue of these symphonies. They are full of beautiful things, all in the most excellent style. The editor has cued in the wind parts so that the original scoring (strings, oboes and occasional bassoons, horns and trumpets) may be diminished to strings alone. Frank Bridge's 'There is a willow grows aslant a brook' (Aug.) is an impression for small orchestra (strings, flute, oboe, two clarinets,

bassoon, horn and harp). The title is from 'Hamlet,' and the slender movement is beautifully written and finely scored. It is rather a large order for amateur orchestral societies. But by hiring a harpist they should be able to manage a reputable performance, and would find it worth while to study this delightful short work. A minuet by Giovanni Battista Grazioli (18th century) has been orchestrated by M. Esposito for strings, flute, bassoon (the wind *ad. lib.*) and drums (also *ad. lib.*) with good result. This would suit those who shy at Mr. Bridge's work.

#### Songs.

Eighteen songs by Frederick Delius come from Tischer und Jagen-berg of Cologne (O.U.P. agents). They range in date from the settings of poems by Ibsen and Björnson (1889) to Fiona Macleod's 'Hy Braail' (1913), thus giving a fairly complete view of the composer's development as a song-writer. The earliest of them have already a melodic form which hints at what was to become in time a 'settled habit of musical phraseology.' This can be seen in the accompaniment of 'Eine Vogelweise.' The exquisite 'Wiegenlied' has, however, none of the later Delius's mannered writing, but is built in a style Brahms himself might have affected. The Shelley songs were evidently written for the German translation. The Verlaine set (the first two 1895, the last 1910) are altogether finer, 'Il pleure dans mon cœur,' a lovely thing, and 'La lune blanche,' truest Delius, fit for comparison with the best of the innumerable settings of that poem. By Verlaine also is the wonderfully fine 'Les sanglots longs,' one of the greatest songs of those here under consideration.

Three songs by John Ireland are undated (Aug.). They are in a more popular vein than the composer's remarkable Hardy songs or than the two Housman songs noticed in the last issue of *MUSIC AND LETTERS*, and are probably earlier work. The first is 'Love and Friendship,' to words by Emily Brontë, a worthy setting of the rather dour lines, with a remarkably interesting pianoforte part. Next there is 'Friendship in misfortune' to an anonymous poem, full of rich harmonies, with a fine vocal line. Lastly there is 'The one hope,' a setting of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's words which gets near the Thomas Hardy songs, and poses a fair enough problem for singer and player alike.

Three women composers are represented. Rebecca Clarke is already known as an able song-writer. Three songs of hers (W.R.) call for mention. There is a certain temerity in setting the terrible Housman poem 'He stood and heard the steeple sprinkle the quarters on the morning town.' Really the poem needs no musical commentary. Its message may be left as it is. Rebecca Clarke, having taken the step, must be allowed her merits as a musician. That part has been managed successfully. But better to have left the thing as it was. 'Greeting' is a good song, singable, pleasant. But 'A dream,' to words by Yeats, is altogether a better piece of work, original in conception, excellent in workmanship. Katherine Parker's six songs (W.R.) ought to be heard. They each have got something good in them, something personal to the composer and peculiar to the mood of the song. 'I am disquieted' and 'Yellow's the robe for honour' seem the two best. Elizabeth Poston says some effective things in her five songs (W.R.). The voice part in 'Youth is pleasure' and 'Call for the robin redbreast' (from Webster's 'White devil') seems in

danger of being overweighted by an ornate pianoforte accompaniment. But these things have a habit of smoothing themselves out in performance, and careful management might settle the matter. 'Be still, my sweet sweeting' is an attractive song.

*Solo instruments with pianoforte.*

Six airs arranged for violoncello or violin and pianoforte by John Barbirolli (O.U.P.) are taken from Purcell, Schumann, Rameau, Mozart, Mendelssohn and Bach. No harm seems to have been done to the distinguished originals. The bowing and phrasing marks (not printed in the pianoforte score) are reliable and helpful. Two movements by Sir Alexander Mackenzie for violoncello and pianoforte (Aug.) are pleasant additions to the light literature of the instrument. So also Cedric Sharpe's 'Old-time dance' for the same combination (Cra.). A 'Mallorca' by Paul Edmonds (Aug.) has very little to say for itself as regards music. It would be useful for a learner of the violin to take in his stride. A still younger violinist could be set to worry at Paul Zilcher's short violin pieces and his easy duets (Aug.) without much harm to his musical sense or much trial to his temper.

## THE GRAMOPHONE

### RECENT RECORDINGS OF NOTE

#### Orchestral

*Ax:terberg*: Symphony in C, No. 6. The work which won the £2,000 prize offered by Columbia in connection with the Schubert Centenary has been recorded by Beecham and the R. Phil. Orchestra. People may or may not like the first and third movements, but all who respond to the poetry of the North, as this expresses itself in music, will be moved by the second movement. The symphony is, however, brimming over with melody; it is full of vitality; its orchestration is rich; and altogether the music is, at the least, attractive from start to finish. Beecham records the third movement (the finale) in a very vivacious manner: when he gave the symphony in public at the Queen's Hall on November 18th he played it in a stronger, slightly slower manner, thereby greatly improving it.

*Bach*: Prelude in E flat minor, and 'Ich ruf' zu dir' (H.M.V.: Stokowsky and the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra). Bach is here presented with intense emotional thrill. The playing is superb.

*Beethoven*: Symphonies VI and VIII (H.M.V.: Franz Schalk and the Vienna Phil. Orchestra). Performances in the modern forceful manner, with strongly individual thought and no yielding to tradition. Call it the new youth of the 20th century accepting the challenge of Beethoven, and not failing in the issue.

*Bizet*: the 'L'Arlésienne' music, recorded in full, with chorus (Columbia: Pierre Chagnon and the Orchestre symphonique de Paris). Part 4 must be re-numbered part 10, and part 10 must be re-numbered part 4. It is interesting to go through the whole of Bizet's music to this Daudet play; but the two familiar concert suites contain all of the music which is really good.

*Brahms*: Symphony No. 1, C minor (3 recordings:—H. M. V.: Leopold Stokowsky and the Philadelphia Orchestra. H. M. V.: Hermann Abendroth

and the L.S.O. Columbia: Felix Weingartner and the Royal Phil. Orchestra).

*Brahms*: Symphony No. 2 (Columbia: Walter Damrosch and the New York Symphony Orchestra).

There is no possible opportunity here to discuss this amazing Brahms issue. Gramophonists will select the performance of the C minor which is offered by the conductor they most favour. Each of the three is a perfect example of the art of recording in its present very advanced state.

The recording of the difficult (difficult from the point of view of the gramophone) D major is by far the best of any I have listened to.

*Debussy*: 'Fêtes,' No. 2 of the Nocturnes (H.M.V.: Stokowsky and the Philadelphia Orchestra).

*Delius*: Entr'acte from 'A Village Romeo and Juliet,' the Walk to Paradise Gardens (Columbia: Beecham and the Royal Phil. Orchestra). Probably the most exquisite piece of Delius recording in existence.

*Falla*: dance from 'La Vida Breve'; and Fire Ritual Dance from 'L'Amour Sorcier' (H.M.V.: Piero Coppola and the Symphony Orchestra). Spanish music played with more refinement and polish than native Spanish musicians seem to desire. But a remarkable exhibition of Falla's clear writing for the orchestra.

*Granados*: Three Dances—Oriental, Andalouse and Rondalla Aragonesa; and *Albeniz*: 'Triana,' scored by Arbos (H.M.V.: Eugene Goossens and the New Light Symphony Orchestra). The gem of the Granados pieces is the Aragonesa. The copla (or trio section) of this dance is played in this arrangement by the trumpets, etc.; in the arrangement used by Sir Henry J. Wood the leading instrument is the cello.

*Mozart*: two recordings—H.M.V.: Erich Kleiber and the Berlin Opera House Orchestra; and Columbia: Weingartner and the Royal Phil. Orchestra. As with the above Brahms

Symphonies, gramophonists will select according to their choice of conductor. For the present reviewer, Kleiber is a trifle too young for Mozart, and he certainly lacks the intimate, delicate humour which the music wants; whereas in this last respect Weingartner seems to him ideally gifted.

Rimsky-Korsakoff: 'Scheherazade' (H.M.V.: Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra). Playing of the finest possible kind, as if from a band of soloists.

Rossini: 'William Tell' Overture (Columbia: Henry J. Wood and the N.Q.H.O.). A delightfully poetic interpretation, with splendid energy in the Storm and March Finale.

Stravinski: Tableaux I to IV, 'Petrouchka' (Columbia: the Symphony Orchestra, Stravinski conducting). This is likely to prove one of the most widely popular of all recordings of present-day composition. There is nothing alarming in the music, even the illustrative 'effects' becoming simple after a few hearings. Amateurs interested in modern art will be grateful to Columbia for this important venture into a phase of music which the gramophone hitherto has more or less avoided.

Wagner: Funeral March from 'Götterdämmerung' (Parlophone: Max von Schillings and the Symphony Orchestra).

#### Choral

Palestrina: the Missa Papæ Marcelli (H. M. V.: Westminster Cathedral Choir). Of interest for those who are familiar with the use of a capella music in Catholic churches.

Schubert: Mass in G (H.M.V.: the Philharmonic Choir, with soloists and orchestra). A beautifully sung rendering of a work written by Schubert in his 19th year.

Russian Folk Music: 3 folk songs (one disc) sung by the Don Cossacks Choir (Columbia) illustrate several primitive aspects of native Russian music. They are 'Kanawka,' 'Dudka,' and 'Stenka Rasin.' The latter is particularly lovely.

#### Chamber Music and Solo Instruments

Beethoven: Theme and Variations for cello, Op. 66, arranged by Lionel Tertis for viola (Columbia).

Beethoven: 'Moonlight' Sonata (Mark Hambourg: H.M.V.).

Debussy: Quartet in G minor (Columbia: the Léner Quartet).

Grieg: Cello Sonata, Op. 56 (Columbia: Felix Salmond and Simeon Rumschitsky).

Grieg: Violin Sonata, Op. 45 (H.M.V.: Marjorie Hayward and Una Bourne).

Mozart: Quartet in D, K575 (H.M.V.: Flonzaley).

Mozart: Quartet in D, K285 (N.G.S.).

Purcell: Fantasia No. 9 (National Gramophonic Society).

Rossini-Liszt: the 'Rigoletto' paraphrase (H.M.V.: Cortot).

Schubert: Quintet in C (Columbia: London String Quartet, and Horace Britt).

Schubert: Quartet in E flat, 1817 (Columbia: Musical Art Quartet).

Schumann: Piano Quintet (H.M.V.: Gabrilowitsch and the Flonzaley Quartet).

Tartini: Sonata in G (Columbia Joseph Szegedi).

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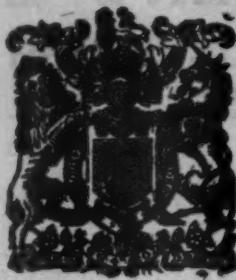
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